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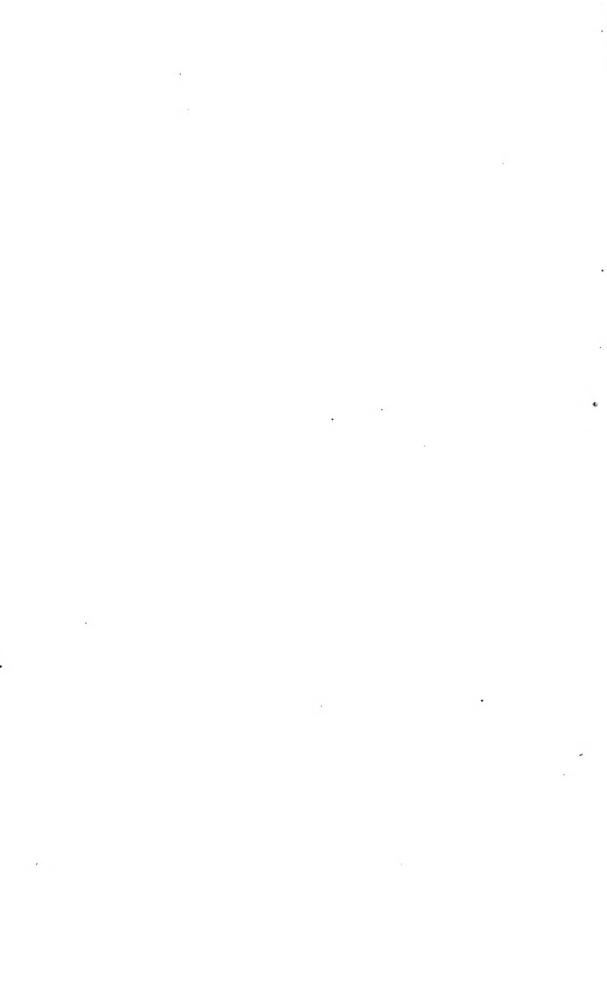
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# CONTENTS.

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## PART I.

### HISTORY OF THE REPUBLIC.

#### CHAPTER I.

|                      | Page |
|----------------------|------|
| ITS ORIGIN . . . . . | 5    |

#### CHAPTER II.

|                        |    |
|------------------------|----|
| ITS PROGRESS . . . . . | 18 |
|------------------------|----|

#### CHAPTER III.

|                        |    |
|------------------------|----|
| ITS MERIDIAN . . . . . | 33 |
|------------------------|----|

#### CHAPTER IV.

|                       |    |
|-----------------------|----|
| ITS DECLINE . . . . . | 63 |
|-----------------------|----|

#### CHAPTER V.

|                    |    |
|--------------------|----|
| ITS FALL . . . . . | 85 |
|--------------------|----|

## PART II.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE CITY.

## CHAPTER I.

|                           | Page |
|---------------------------|------|
| THE GRAND CANAL . . . . . | 96   |

## CHAPTER II.

|                                                 |     |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----|
| ST. MARK'S PLACE AND THE DUCAL PALACE . . . . . | 115 |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----|

## CHAPTER III.

|                     |     |
|---------------------|-----|
| THE DUOMO . . . . . | 143 |
|---------------------|-----|

## CHAPTER IV.

|                        |     |
|------------------------|-----|
| THE CHURCHES . . . . . | 154 |
|------------------------|-----|

## CHAPTER V.

|                            |     |
|----------------------------|-----|
| PUBLIC BUILDINGS . . . . . | 170 |
|----------------------------|-----|

## CHAPTER VI.

|                          |     |
|--------------------------|-----|
| ADJACENT ISLES . . . . . | 181 |
|--------------------------|-----|

# VENICE: PAST AND PRESENT.

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## PART I.

### HISTORY OF THE REPUBLIC.

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#### CHAPTER I.

##### ITS ORIGIN.

AMONG the many names which imagination has applied to Venice, as illustrative of its character, there is one which truly points to its origin. It has been called a City of Refuge. It was built by refugees.

In the fifth century, the Goths, under Alaric, and the Huns, under Attila, poured down the southern side of the Alps, and ravaged the garden-like plains of northern Italy. The cities of Lombardy were sacked and burned, and its villages left desolate, in dreadful fulfilment of the conquering Hun's threat, that "the grass should never grow where his horse once trod." He reached as far as Padua, the terrified inhabitants who could escape his sword fleeing before him. There lay to the east of that city an extensive but dreary region of flat land and shallow water, formed by rivers which had for ages been flowing into the Adriatic Gulf. The Lagune, as the expanse was called, looked like a part of the ocean, streaked and dotted over

by a number of isles and islets. There was the nest of the sea-bird and the hut of the fisherman. The shallows were crossed by estuaries, forming channels of sufficient depth to admit of Roman and Greek vessels of considerable burden anchoring there with perfect safety. It was on the side of one of them that an island was situated, called on that account *Isola del Rialto*, or the island of the deep stream. It served as a port to the city of Padua, and a few rude buildings, for maritime purposes, built on its barren sands—to which in 421 a church was added—formed the chief architecture of the forbidding region. Nothing could be found there to allure the inhabitants of peaceful and prosperous lands; but the very desolation of the spot, and its difficulty of access, were an attraction to men who were flying before an invader not likely to pause till he came where there was nothing to tempt onwards his ambitious career. People from Padua, and other cities, therefore, fled to the Lagune. They built houses on the Rialto. There chiefly they clustered. Its church was to them a centre, an ornament, and, perhaps, they counted it a defence. That early edifice is said to have stood on the spot now occupied by St. Mark's. It was probably some humble structure in the late Roman style, far different indeed from the present one. When Padua was taken by the Lombards, in 593, that city was almost totally abandoned, and the inhabitants joined their fathers and brethren, who had emigrated at an earlier period. The people of Altino, suffering

from the Lombardic invasion, also sought refuge in the Lagune, and fixed on the island of Torcello, what they called, with a touch of patriotic love for their ancient home, "the port of the deserted city." The citizens of Concordia repaired to Caorlo.

The state of the people must have been for a time a struggle for existence, a war with the elements, a conflict against the sea, a hard effort to gain mastery over the land. But they were industrious and persevering, full of courage, endurance, and enterprise. They fished and manufactured salt, and bartered the products of their toil for the fruits of the mainland. They went on building vessels and houses. The Lagune began to look cheerful on a summer's morning, as the fishing boats sailed out. The seaman saw the home comforts of his wife and children on the increase. The infant trade of the settlers daily gained strength. More valuable cargoes went out, richer freights came in. Men aspiring to be merchants—the fathers of a race of princely ones—standing on the shores of their little island, which they had embanked and fortified against the waters, watched the weather and the boats, and hailed the arrival of traffic from other lands. Resources increased and population spread, while the neighbouring spots of land, as well as the Rialto, became covered at last. More ready means of communication than boats could supply were felt to be more and more needful. Bridges, therefore, were built, and from groups of huts there began to appear streets of houses. Of the growth of the colony

in extent, population, buildings, and commerce, during its earliest period, only very general notions can be formed, as we have no statistics on the subject, nor any means of marking its progress in this respect by specific dates.

Something less indefinite may be said respecting its government. The first of all the emigrants who went to the Rialto—those who commenced peopling it upon Alaric's invasion—as early as 407 were governed by consuls sent from Padua, which they regarded as their metropolis; but when Padua fell, and her children joined the emigrants, that tie of dependence ceased. Each of the principal islands, twenty-four in number, of which it may be observed that the Rialto was not the chief, either in size or importance, elected a magistrate, bearing the appellation of tribune. They met on certain days to consult upon common affairs, and on important occasions a *concio*, or general assembly of the people, was convoked. This might serve well enough for the regulation of affairs in an infant colony, but after two centuries and a half it was found inefficient. Inconveniences in the system had been increasing during that time. There were differences between the tribunes, and there was turbulence among the people. The republic was threatened by civil war, and that, too, while her growing importance attracted the attention and hostility of others. The Longobards made a descent upon one of the islands; pirates from Istria and Slavonia lurked in the lagoons. A steady, concentrated, commanding government was indispensable.



The clergy and people inclined to the appointment of one supreme ruler. There was a general assembly ; Paolo Luca Anafesto was elected to the dignity of governor, under the title of *doge*, or duke. His duties were thus rather vaguely proclaimed: "Let the doge alone preside over the government of the people with justice and moderation ; let him appoint the tribunes and the judges, who shall administer justice both to clergy and people ; and if any one think himself aggrieved, let him apply to the doge." He was chosen for life, the revenue was at his disposal, and the power of convoking general assemblies of the people was vested in him. The administration of Anafesto was vigorous and successful, not only maintaining internal order, but increasing the territory of the republican islands by the addition of a narrow slip of the mainland. His next successor but one was haughty and ambitious, and having provoked the displeasure of his subjects, was put to death by them in a popular outbreak. Dissatisfied with the rule of one man for life, the assembly resolved, in 737, upon having a magistrate whose term of office should be only for five years, and who should bear the title of *Maestro della Milizia*, or Master of the Militia. The island of Heraclea had been the seat of government, and to Malamocco that honour was now assigned. But the new form of government was of short duration. The fifth master was a victim of popular tumult, and had his eyes torn out by the savage populace. The office of doge was revived, and the history of the nine

following successors to the title resolves itself into a series of oppressions on the one side and rebellion on the other, terminating in the deposition of the ruler and his loss of sight—the usual punishment inflicted by the people on a hateful prince. In 804, we find Pepin at war with the islanders, from causes and motives differently stated by historical authorities; but this is certain, that he took possession of some of the islands, and wreaked upon them a furious revenge. The doge Angelo Participazio shines in the clouded annals of those remote and troublous times as an illustrious name, a saviour of the state, the founder of its metropolis, and the father of its glory. Under him peace was restored, and the Rialto became the seat of government. It was connected with the neighbouring islets by numerous bridges, an emblem of the consolidation of power, and the union of interests under his ducal sway; while in an open space by its southern shore there was a palace, which, in connexion with the neighbouring church, afterwards became a pile of buildings, the wonder of all lands; and such it still remains. The connected group of isles, with the Rialto for a centre, now took the name of *Venice*. Venetia had been the appellation of the Roman province in which Padua was situated, and of which the Lagune was the eastern extremity. The old geographical boundaries melted away, and gave place to new distributions of territory; but the title of the mother-land was always revered by the refugees driven from its shores, and they were proud to apply

it to the little territory they had almost created for themselves out of the midst of the waters.

During the period just noticed, it is most likely that the Venetians considered themselves as subject, though in a very loose and general sense, to the Greek emperors; but for essential purposes, the republic might be deemed, after the last great immigration from Padua, an independent state, the doge neither paying tribute to any superior power, nor asking from it a sanction of his proceedings.

From the birth of Venice, properly so called, which may be dated about 809, for nearly two hundred years its historical annals are very barren of interesting facts, inasmuch as they are confined to the enumeration of names little known, interspersed with accounts of internal tumults, now little cared for, and frequent fights between the Venetians and the Narentani from the Dalmatian coast. But there are two legendary stories assigned to that age of a different character. The first is so interwoven with fables that it is impossible to separate the true from the false, and certainly serves rather to illustrate the credulity of after ages in which it was believed, than the history of the time in which the incidents it records are said to have occurred. About the year 827, so runs the story, some Venetian ships were trading at the port of Alexandria, when the church containing the body of the evangelist Mark was about to be destroyed, in order that its rich materials might be employed in the decoration of a palace which

was then building. The captains, with some difficulty, obtained from the priests of the church the custody of the body, a transaction which had to be conducted with great secrecy, as the relic was in high repute with the people of the city. Such was its sanctity, that the moment it was disturbed a rich perfume filled the building, and the robbery was on the point of being betrayed. Another corpse, that of St. Claudia, was substituted in its stead, and the Venetians at length carried off their prize to the ship, concealing it in a large basket, which they covered with joints of pork and herbs, and cried, to the horror of every Mussulman as they passed along the streets, "Khanzir, Khanzir."\* Safely on board, it was wrapped in one of the sails and hoisted to the yard-arm of the main-mast till the moment of weighing anchor, an expedient which turned out to be very necessary, as a careful scrutiny into the cargo of the vessel was instituted before it was allowed to leave the port. A storm arose on the homeward voyage, but the apparition of the saint commanding the master to furl his sails, saved the vessel from being lost. On reaching Venice, the body of the saint was received with rapturous joy, and the event was celebrated by a festival of processions and prayers. With this tradition others were associated. It was said that St. Mark, when alive, had visited Aquileia and the Venetian Isles, and that on his landing at the spot now occupied by the church of San Francesco della Vigna, he was saluted by

\* The meaning of the word is "a hog."

an angel with the words, "*Pax tibi, Marce, evangelista meus.*"\*

It was added afterwards, that the body disappeared, but was recovered through the odour it emitted and the light it diffused. Nay, an arm emerged from a marble column and dropped a ring, and immediately an iron coffin was disclosed, containing the bones of the evangelist. Some parts of these legends are too absurd to be criticised, and reflect lasting dishonour on a church that can sanction and perpetrate such frauds; nevertheless, it may be admitted that some corpse, called St. Mark's, received, about the time just mentioned, great honours at Venice, when the evangelist was adopted as the patron saint, and the winged lion, his emblem, was emblazoned on their banners and stamped on their coins, and "*Viva San Marco*" became their cry in war—their song in peace.†

The next of the legends referring to the early period of Venetian story, and the subject of which is dated 932, is that so well known by the title of the Brides of Venice. According to ancient custom, marriages among the great families of the republic were celebrated several at a time, and with much publicity. The Feast of the Purification was the chosen season for such solemnities, when the state gave a rich dowry to twelve maidens of noble descent. In the island of Olivolo, then unoccupied, except

\* "Peace to thee, Mark, my evangelist."

† A passage in Eustace's Classical Tour deserves to be noticed in connexion with the legend. See vol. i. p. 110.

by priests, the marriage ceremony was to take place. The brides and the bridegrooms came to the church in their gondolas, attended by their friends, and with a display of the greatest magnificence that the age and country could afford. Certain pirates from Istria had thought this would be a good opportunity for capture and pillage, so they lay in ambush the preceding night, and when the young nobles and virgins were at the altar, of course unarmed, and unsuspecting of danger, the ruffians rushed in and seized the latter, bearing them off in their splendid dresses to the vessels which had been conveniently moored for their reception. The deed was done in the very presence of the doge, and he immediately called on the citizens to arm and pursue the robbers. The bridegrooms, as might be supposed, were foremost in the pursuit, and ere the captors could get out of the Lagune, they were seized and slain, and the terrified damsels brought back in triumph. The rites were re-commenced, and the maidens were soon united to their betrothed. The trunkmakers, it is said, formed the greater portion of the crew who rescued the damsels, and when the adventure was over, the doge asked what privilege they wished in commemoration. They requested an annual procession to their island, and on being asked, "But what if the day should prove rainy?" replied, "We will send you hats to cover your heads, and if you are thirsty we will give you drink." Hence, we are told, originated the annual procession of the Brides of Venice to

the church of Sta. Maria Formosa, when the priest was wont, on the doge's landing, to offer two flasks of malmsey, two oranges, and two hats adorned with his armorial bearings :—

“ The doge resign'd  
His crimson for pure ermine, visiting  
At earliest dawn St. Mary's silver shrine,  
And through the city, in a stately barge  
Of gold were borne, with songs and symphonies,  
Twelve ladies, young and noble. Clad they were  
In bridal white, with bridal ornaments,  
Each in her glittering veil, and on the deck,  
As on a burnished throne, they glided by :  
No window or balcony, but adorn'd  
With hangings of rich texture ; not a roof  
But covered with beholders, and the air  
Vocal with joy.”

But we must leave the region of legends, observing, however, that the latter, doubtless, is in substance true, though clothed in that romantic guise, and with those hues of fancy, with which the imaginative, telling an old tradition, are accustomed to clothe the tale.

From the foundation of Venice, especially after its consolidation and establishment under Angelo Participazio, it had been growing in naval importance, commerce, and wealth. Its insular position preserved it from invasion by armies. It could be attacked only from the sea, but its maritime power was daily on the increase, partly from the necessities of its situation, and partly from its enterprising spirit and its indomitable perseverance. It was able to cope with such enemies as cared to meet it on its own element, and not only conquered the humble fleets that sailed from the coasts of Illyricum, but successfully did battle with

portions of the Saracenic navy of loftier pretensions. Naturally, from its situation on the Adriatic, it became the emporium of Italy, Greece, and the neighbouring countries; and as its shipping increased its wealth, its wealth increased its shipping. The ingenuity and skill of the rising state were applied to naval architecture, and strong-built vessels, fit for distant voyages, were launched in her dockyards. Houses, bridges, churches, public works, were increasing in number, size, and display of taste; and though the Venice of the tenth century was only the type and promise of what she afterwards became, yet at that period she was decidedly in advance of her maritime neighbours. She had ever been ambitious, and as her resources increased, so did her desires. Her territory was limited. Beyond her sandy islets she had only a narrow slip of country on the mainland. At the close of the tenth century there appeared a doge who started her in the path of territorial aggrandizement. It was Pietro Orseolo II., the son of a former prince, famed for his virtues and piety. When a child, his father prophesied he would be great, and, therefore, the auguries which opened his reign were favourable to his successful career. He obtained enlarged privileges from the Greek empire, and formed an alliance with Syria and Egypt. The Dalmatian towns on the sea-coast were subject to the incursion of the pirates of Narenta. Some say the towns sought the aid of the Venetians against their foes, others say the Venetians volunteered it; at any rate,



Orseolo sailed out of the lagunes with a powerful fleet, under the flag of St. Mark, and bent his way to the Dalmatian coast. The pirates did not come across his ships, but the towns of Zara, Tran, Sebenico, Spalato, and others, received him as a protector, and swore allegiance to the republic. Other places on the eastern coast of the Adriatic followed their example. Some islands offered resistance, but these were subdued. A podesta, nominated by the doge, was placed over each town which had been led to own the Venetian sovereignty, and Orseolo returned in triumph to his palace at the Rialto, to wear, in addition to his old title, that of Duke of Dalmatia. The emperor Otho III., his friend, approved of this accession of power and title. He even visited the doge, and relieved him from all claims of vassalage. The visit was characteristic of the age and of the republic to which it was made: it was paid in secret, on the way to Rome. With only five domestics, Otho entered Venice at night, and took up his abode at the monastery of San Servolo. With corresponding mysteriousness, he met the doge and accompanied him to St. Mark's. The people were unaware of the presence of the illustrious visitor, for the doge dined publicly alone, and only enjoyed the emperor's society at supper-time in a secret apartment. When Otho had left, his visit was made known and his concessions announced.

## CHAPTER II.

## ITS PROGRESS.

THE subjection of Dalmatia was an important epoch in the history of Venice, and may be regarded as giving an impulse to that progress in arms and power, which it is the object of this chapter briefly to trace and illustrate.

In the year 1006, the once great commercial city of Hadria was besieged and destroyed by the Venetians, under the doge Othone. About eighty years afterwards, the emperor Comnenus was induced to renounce all authority even in name over the territory of Dalmatia, leaving it entirely in the hands of the republic, to whose ships he opened his ports, and to whose subjects, residing in Constantinople, he granted the privilege of naturalization. Further, he compelled Amalfi to do homage to her rival, by paying an annual tribute to St. Mark's Church: but far more important consequences resulted from this friendship with the Greeks in the association with the Crusades to which it introduced the Venetians. The first fleet they sent forth upon the memorable enterprise to the

Holy Land, which so aroused the ardent enthusiasm of all Europe, consisted of more than two hundred sail, under the doge Vitale Michieli. This was in the year 1098. Four years later the doge Ordelafo Faliero took a still more distinguished part in the holy wars, and obtained from Baldwin the grant of a fourth part of the city of Acre, and free commerce throughout his kingdom of Jerusalem. By subduing Zara, he became duke of Croatia, but fell just after in a battle with the Hungarians. The successor of the next doge Michieli at Jaffa, added to the Venetian domain in Palestine, by obtaining the allotment of an entire street in every city of the new kingdom established there by the Crusaders, together with a bath, a bakehouse, a church, and a market. An immunity from taxes was also granted to Venetian residents, and the right of trial by magistrates of their own in all cases of offence. He took the lead in the assault on Tyre, and returned home in 1125, crowned with victory and honours. Among his trophies he brought three lofty columns, plundered from the Islands of the Archipelago ; for the morality of Venice in such matters was low enough. Two of them are the identical columns which now ornament the Piazzetta. It was fifty-five years after their arrival before any engineer could be found to place them upright. The third was sunk in the attempt to land it.

The increase of territory and influence which Venice obtained through her engagement in the Crusades, at the persuasion of Constantinople, now aroused the jealousy of that power, whose

displeasure was also awakened by the assistance which the republic had given to the Latins, the bitter enemies of the Greeks. A dreadful war ensued between the eastern empire and its former ally, attended with sad disasters to the latter. Tremendous reprisals were afterwards taken, in connexion with the fourth Crusade, in 1203. The Crusaders assembled at Venice to embark on that memorable expedition. The republic supplied the ships, which were placed under the command of the famous Dandolo. He was old and blind, having been cruelly deprived of his sight during his residence at Constantinople as envoy, and his appointment to the office of admiral, which seems so strange, was owing to the offer he made of his services, in a manner which renders the incident one of the most romantic in the history of Venice. There was a great assembly at St. Mark's, to hear mass on the Sunday after the engagement with the Crusaders had been ratified. The aged Dandolo, who was then doge, suddenly rose and ascended the pulpit, to the astonishment of all. "Signiors," he said, "you are associated with the bravest people upon earth for the highest enterprise which mortal man can undertake. I am a very old man, feeble in health, and have more need of repose than of glory; yet knowing none more capable of guiding and commanding you than myself, who am your lord, if it be your pleasure that I should take the sign of the cross, to watch over and direct you, and leave my son in my place to protect our country, I will cheerfully go, and

live and die with you and with the pilgrims." The speech was received with enthusiasm. "We beseech you," they cried, "to do as you have said, and to go with us." The old man prostrated himself before the high altar, pouring tears from his sightless eyes as he fastened the cross on his ducal bonnet. His son was declared regent during his absence, and the fleet set sail under the blind old man, with a display of magnificence rare even in that age of pomp and pageantry. Dandolo availed himself of the influence which was given him by his command, to persuade the Crusaders to attack Constantinople. The fleet forced its way through the Golden Horn, and advanced under the walls of the capital of the east. The chronicler Villehardouin dwells graphically upon this page of Venetian history. "Now you shall hear," he says, "of the dauntless valour of the duke of Venice, who, old and blind as he was, stood upon the prow of his galley, with the standard of St. Mark spread before him, urging his people to push on to the shore on peril of his high displeasure. By wondrous exertions they ran the galley ashore, and leaping out, bore the banner of St. Mark before him on the land. When the Venetians saw the banner of St. Mark on the land, and that their duke's galley had been the first to touch the ground, they pushed on in shame and emulation, and the men of the palanders\* sprang to land, in rivalry with each other, and commenced a furious assault." The attack was

\* Palandra, a bomb-ketch.

successful, but it was on a second expedition to Constantinople, in 1205, that the victory of Venice was completed, and the Byzantine empire fell. Abundance of costly spoil was brought home by the victors, and, among the rest, the four gilt bronze horses which adorn the portico of St. Mark's. On the distribution of territory among the allies, the Venetians received the Peloponnesus, Eubœa, Andros, Ægina, Salamis, and other islands of the Ægean, Sestos and Abydos on the Dardanelles, some towns in Thrace, the Ionian Isles, the coast of Epirus and Acarnania, the province of Durazzo, and the isle of Crete. "The illustrious Dandolo, as the close of his splendid toils, and in honourable completion of the original treaty, was permitted to tinge his buskins with the purple hue distinctive of the imperial family, to claim exemption from all feudal service to the emperor, and to annex to the title of doge of Venice, the style of Despot of Romania and Lord of one-fourth of one-eighth of the Roman empire."

The Crusades eminently contributed to stimulate the commerce and increase the wealth of Venice. For a century and a half she had almost the exclusive monopoly of transporting the populous armies which precipitated themselves upon Asia. The impulse which this must have given to Venetian shipbuilding and connected manufactures, the trade it must have created in the collection of provisions to store the vessels, the multiplied forms of manual industry it must have brought into play, the money

spent by such crowds of strangers during even their transient visit to the City of the Waters, on their way to the Holy Land, must strike the reader on a moment's reflection. How the docks of Venice must have resounded with the blow of the axe and the stroke of the hammer on the anvil! How busy must have been the armourers in their workshops, and the men in the arsenal! How numerous must have been the boats bringing cargoes from the mainland! How active must have been the merchants in buying and selling what was needful for the equipments, while they would connect with the more regular traffic speculations in the produce of eastern lands! How large the custom at shops for articles of ornament and luxury! How crowded, too, must have been the Place of St. Mark with the people of different countries in their varied costumes! How animated the scenes in inns and hostelries, and even monasteries, as entertainment was sought for knights, and barons, and princes! How gay the harbour with the flags of many nations floating on the ships—and the canals, with the painted gondolas, taking out the maids and brides of Venice to gaze on all this stir and bustle! One sees in a moment what the Crusades must have done for Venice.

At the same time, they added much to the splendour of the city, and the luxury of its nobles and merchants. The conquests in the east brought rich spoils for the decoration of public edifices, while familiarity with the Byzantine style, in architecture and other works of

art, inspired a gorgeous taste for building and adornment. Mosques and temples yielded up to them their precious ornaments. Marble statues, columns of serpentine and porphyry, gates of bronze, vases of precious material, and pictures in mosaic, were removed from the positions where their artists had placed them, to enrich and grace the great maritime city, which had not begun to exist when some of them were fashioned. Native architects and artists were filled with dreams of invention, at least with desires of emulation, as they gazed on these trophies of victory. "All was for Venice," exclaims Jules le Comte, with the enthusiasm of a Frenchman. "The sea which washed her marble feet, brought all these treasures of art to exalt the imagination of her artists. For now that she was rich, and powerful, and glorious, through her arms, she thought it necessary that she should nourish the arts. She had already her architects, and her workers in mosaic : she was to have her statuaries and her founders." In the houses of the merchants, fast rising into princes—houses approaching the magnificence of palaces—there would be introduced those eastern luxuries of which victory and wealth now gave the command. The hangings, the furniture, the silk, the jewels, the spices, the perfumery of oriental climes, would be imported in abundance, and bought with avidity. Towards the end of the eleventh century, the Greek luxuries introduced to Venice by a doge's wife, who happened to be a Constantinopolitan, excited the surprise and dis-



pleasure of the chronicler who describes them. The dogeressa had perfumed waters, her apartment was filled with fragrant odours, and she used golden forks. By the beginning of the thirteenth century such indulgences had ceased to surprise and displease, though shared by many below ducal rank. It is very melancholy to remember the association between all this and the slave trade. In reference to the Venetians, it has been remarked, as a humiliating proof of the degradation of Christendom, that "they were reduced to purchase the luxuries of Asia by supplying the slave-market of the Saracens. Their apology would perhaps have been that these were purchased of their heathen neighbours; but a slave-dealer was probably not very inquisitive as to the faith or origin of his victim."\*

Certain changes took place in the government of Venice, during the period under review, which require here at least some general notice. In the reign of Dominico Flabanico, 1032-42, two important resolutions passed the assembly of the people. One was that the doge should not be allowed to have any colleague in his high office, the permission of which had led to the nomination of a successor in the lifetime of the reigning doge, and thus to the monopolizing of power in the same family. The other resolution was, that two assessors of the doge should be annually appointed, which was the revival of a practice adopted under the doge Monegarrio. It may be added, that Flabanico himself intro-

\* Hallam.

duced the custom of soliciting advice on matters of state from eminent citizens, which was the origin of the council of "the Pregadi." The establishment of a supreme court, in 1094, under three functionaries, called judges of the palace, transferred from the doge the power of deciding in cases of final appeal. More important alterations were made in 1172. They amounted to a new constitution. The tendency of the Venetian government, for a long time, had been towards aristocracy. The powers of the doge were such as to make him absolute master of the state. His popular election, a relic of the early democratic habits of the republic, did not prevent his subsequent despotism. Such election was often secured by dishonourable influence, and was attended by tumultuary scenes. Nor were popular assemblies for council, which he only had the right of convoking, much of a counterpoise. To check the too great authority of the chief magistrate of the state had been the object of recent expedients. More effectually to do this, and at the same time to prevent the disturbances arising out of the democratic element, which still lingered beside the absolutism of the dogeship, was the design of the political revolution of 1172. The history may be reduced to four particulars

1. Instead of assemblies of the people there was to be a great council, consisting of four hundred and seventy or four hundred and eighty persons. This was to constitute a representative body, and was to be chosen by twelve electors. How they were elected is not at all clear.
2. The

great council was to choose twenty-four of their number, from whom eleven were by themselves to be selected.\* These eleven were to go to St. Mark's when a new doge was required, and there to elect him by a majority of votes. A democratic form was still retained. "This is the doge elect, if you approve him," was the appeal made from the window of the palace to the crowd in the Piazzetta as he was carried in procession round St. Mark's Place. He threw gold to the populace, and was crowned with the ducal cap at the top of the Giant's Stairs. 3. A senate of sixty was to be taken from the great council for the more efficient discharge of business. 4. Four assessors were added to the two already mentioned, and formed a body of privy councillors for the doge; it grew up into "La Signoria." These officers took the initiative in legislation. With them, too, rested the nomination of judges and magistrates. Our limits compel us to be brief in our account of Venetian politics, but had we more ample space for the subject, it would be difficult to present it with accuracy and clearness, inasmuch as the accounts of these changes in the government, as to details, are rather confused and even inconsistent. But thus much is apparent enough, that the spirit of the new constitution was decidedly aristocratic. Supreme power, which had passed from the people to the doge, now

\* In 1178 the council appointed four persons, who nominated each ten electors. The choice of the doge now depended upon this forty. They must not be confounded with the famous Council of Forty-one which arose afterwards.

began to rest in the hands of a powerful aristocracy. The tendency went on developing itself as time advanced, till it assumed the wonderful form we shall have hereafter to describe.

A famous episode in Italian history—one that recurs to the traveller very often as he walks about Venice, which strikes him especially by the gate of San Salvatore, and under the porch of St. Mark, may here appropriately be introduced, illustrating as it does the growing importance of Venice as a European power at the time to which this chapter relates, and showing also the origin of one of her most picturesque and well-known ceremonials. Pope Alexander III. and Frederic Barbarossa, emperor of Germany, were inveterate enemies to each other. The pope, persecuted by the emperor, and reduced to the greatest extremity, assumed a disguise, and sought shelter in Venice. He is said to have passed the first night under the entrance to the convent of San Salvatore, of which a memorial remains in an inscription inserted in the hall consisting of these words, "*Alexandro III., pont. max., pernoctanti.*" It is further stated by some, that the more effectually to conceal himself, he entered as scullion into the convent kitchen. Others maintain that he was only disguised as a poor priest. A picture in the Sala del Maggior Consiglio of the doge's palace exhibits the pontiff in the last-mentioned style at the moment of his discovery by the doge Ziani and the senate. They paid him the highest honours, received him with

state under the protection of their republic, and despatched messengers to the emperor, requesting reconciliation. The latter haughtily declined, demanding that the pope should be given up, and added, "No treaty, no law of nations, shall avail in their defence if they refuse, and neither God nor man shall avert my revenge. I will press them both by sea and land, and little as they may expect such punishment, I will not stop till I have planted my victorious eagles on the gates of St. Mark." The emperor seems to have little understood the spirit and resources of this maritime republic. Their pride was aroused by his insolence, and their superstitious piety by the claims of the pontiff on their aid. Sixty-five galleys went forth under the doge, and with the blessing of the pope, who publicly consecrated that prince's sword in the Piazza of St. Mark. A naval battle was fought off the Istrian coast, and the emperor was made to rue his temerity in insulting Venice, by suffering not only the capture of a large part of his fleet, but also of his son. The triumphant little armada came back to the Lido with great joy, where it was met with gratitude and gladness by the exiled pontiff. As soon as the doge touched the land, the former presented him with a golden ring. "Take this ring," said he, "and with it take on my authority the sea for your subject. Every year, on the return of this happy day, you and your successor shall make known to all posterity that the right of conquest has subjected the Adriatic to Venice, as a spouse to

her husband." This incident commenced the solemnity so long perpetuated, in the annual marriage of the doge and the Adriatic. He heard mass in the morning at San Nicolo, and then stepped into his gorgeous Bucentaur—the state gondola—built in resemblance of the ship which bore the illustrious Ziani on his successful expedition against the emperor. A grand procession accompanied him down the canal to the shore of the Isle of Lido, at the mouth of the harbour, when a gold ring was dropped into the sea by the doge, with the words, "We wed thee with this ring, in token of our true and perpetual sovereignty." The use of such a custom it may be difficult to estimate in times when the influence of pageantry in the commemoration of past events has lost much of its power, but there can be no doubt that for many ages, when habits of thought and feeling were different from what they are now, the ceremony greatly served to sustain the ambition and enterprise of Venice, animating her to preserve and extend her boasted authority as queen of the sea.

The humiliation of the emperor by the Venetians was followed by a signal defeat in a battle with the Milanese. He was now driven to sue for a peace, which, when offered, he had rejected. He came accordingly to Venice, and concluded a treaty with his spiritual antagonist. He was received in state at the foot of the Piazzetta, where the Great Canal washes the marble steps. The doge and his train escorted him to St. Mark's, where the pope, standing

under the portico, surrounded by cardinals and prelates, awaited his arrival in haughty state. The emperor uncovered his head as he approached, knelt down, and prepared to kiss his feet. Sheltering resentment under the cloak of religion, the pontiff put his foot on the neck of the emperor, exclaiming, "Thou shalt go upon the lion and the adder, and the dragon shalt thou tread under thy feet." Writhing under this sign of degradation, the emperor exclaimed, "It is not to *you*, but to St. Peter." "To me and to St. Peter," rejoined the arrogant priest, as he made the weight of his foot more sensibly felt by the prostrate prince. A piece of red marble, inserted in the pavement of the porch of St. Mark, identifies the spot where the submission took place, and the whole history is portrayed in a series of pictures which adorn the halls of the room in the ducal palace already mentioned. The story suggests to us how powerful Venice must have become, thus to shelter a pope and subdue an emperor; while it leads to salutary reflections respecting the insufferable pride of Rome, and its constant habit, as exemplified in the person of Alexander III., of seeking to trample under foot the powers of the earth.

The doge Ziani accompanied the pope to Rome, where, of course, he was received with great honour, as deliverer of the head of the church. Rewards, very cheap in themselves, but highly valued in that age, were bestowed by the papal court on the Venetians. The republic was allowed to attach a seal of *lead*

instead of *war* to all state documents, thus being raised so far to a level with the holy see. It is also recorded that the lighted candle, the sword, the canopy, the chair of state, the footstool covered with golden cloth, the silver trumpets, and the embroidered banners, which so long figured among the ducal insignia on state occasions, were symbols of authority then formally conceded. A plenary indulgence was added for the Venetian citizens in general, upon the condition that they should hear mass and make confession at St. Mark's on the morning of the Feast of Ascension.



## CHAPTER III.

## ITS MERIDIAN.

IN 1268, an important change took place in the mode of electing the doge. The choice was transferred from the forty-one electors\* to persons chosen out of the grand council by a long and intricate process, in which there were no less than five ballots and five scrutinies. Count Daru has explained the process by some Italian rhymes, which have been thus translated :—

“ From the council’s nomination  
 Thirty meet. Nine keep their station.  
 Forty next by these are chosen,  
 Who, by lot, become a dozen.  
 Five-and-twenty then combine  
 To produce another nine.  
 Hence are five-and-forty given,  
 Who, diminished to eleven,  
 Are by forty-one succeeded,  
 Of whose final votes are needed  
 Five-and-twenty, to create  
 The presiding magistrate.  
 The serene, by whom elected  
 Thus, our statutes are protected.”

*Sketches of Venetian History, vol. i*

The individuals finally chosen as electors were introduced to an apartment, from which no one of them was allowed to issue till the

\* One was added in 1249 to the original forty.

task assigned them was complete. In this seclusion they were magnificently entertained, and all their wishes, except to escape or hold communication with those without, were, if possible, instantly gratified. But, as it was thought right that no preference should be shown to one member of this last committee of choice more than another, whatever any individual of the number happened to ask for was immediately procured, or sought after, on behalf of the rest. Once an elector desired a rosary, that he might count his beads. Forty-one rosaries were soon procured and handed in. Another time, a person desired *Æsop's Fables*—forthwith the book-shops in Venice were ransacked till copies were found sufficient to supply the whole of the conclave.

About the same time that this change was introduced in the mode of electing the doge, it was enacted that he should not marry a foreign lady under any circumstances, nor correspond with any foreign power without the knowledge of the council. According to the same line of policy, no native of Venice was permitted to enter the service of any other country, nor to possess landed estate on the continent of Italy. The latter law, however, was afterwards relaxed. Yet, with all this jealousy of interference on the part of other states, the Venetians were persuaded by the court of Rome, in 1289, to allow the establishment of the Inquisition among them, though that infamous institution never attained the influence at Venice which it did elsewhere. Soon after the change in the election

of the dogeship, a new office was created, which no one on the roll of the nobility was permitted to fill. This was the office of grand chancellor, who, though invested with dignity, was denied all power, and though he ranked next to the doge, and sat in all the assemblies of state, had a voice in none. The object of the arrangement seems mysterious, unless it was to propitiate the favour of the families not ennobled, by allowing them a place of distinction, with the trappings of honour.

“It was not till towards the end of the thirteenth century, that the people began to discover that they were no more than a mere cipher in the republic, and the doge that he was no more than a servant to the grand council; surrounded, indeed, by pomp, but without any real power. In 1289, the people attempted themselves to elect the doge; but the grand council obliged him whom the popular suffrages had designated to leave Venice, and substituted in his place Pietro Gradenigo, the chief of the aristocratic party. Gradenigo undertook to exclude the people from any part in the election of the grand council, as they were already debarred from any participation in the election of the doge. He represented it to the grand council as notorious that for more than a century the same persons or families were invariably re-elected; that the twelve tribunes charged with the annual election contented themselves with examining only whether any of the ancient members merited exclusion from the sovereign council, and confirming all the others; that

since the election was reduced only to the condemnation of some individuals, it was more expedient to confide that judgment to the equity of the same tribunal, to which the citizens entrusted their honour and their lives, than to the arbitrary will of twelve individuals, most frequently nominated by intrigue. He proposed, accordingly, instead of election, the purification of the grand council by the forty criminal judges. The decree, which he proposed and carried on the 28th of February, 1297, is famous in the history of Venice under the name of '*Serrata del maggior consiglio*,' (Shutting of the grand council.) He legally founded that hereditary aristocracy—so prudent, so jealous, so ambitious—which Europe regarded with astonishment; immovable in principle, unshaken in power; imitating some of the most odious practices of despotism, with the name of liberty; suspicious and perfidious in politics, sanguinary in revenge, indulgent to the subject, sumptuous in the public service, economical in the administration of the finances, equitable and impartial in the administration of justice, knowing well how to give prosperity to the arts, agriculture, and commerce; beloved by the people who obeyed it, while it made the nobles who partook of its power tremble."

But while Gradenigo shut the grand council, he sought to propitiate the favour of the people by acts of condescension, one of which was rather amusing. He invited the fishermen of Venice to a public entertainment, at the close of which he permitted these humble sons of toil to give him a

loving embrace and a warm salute. So pleased were these men of the fishing boats with the familiarity which the lord of the city allowed them, that they sought its annual renewal. It at last became so troublesome, that, being unable to drop the custom, the doge was glad to adopt the expedient of wearing a mask. But the contrivances adopted for catching now and then a breath of popularity could not subdue the deep and strong discontent which was at work in the Venetian commonwealth. The nobles, excluded by the shutting up of the council, were no less incensed against the government than the lower classes. Conspiracies followed, especially a notable one under Thiepolo, who counted two doges among his ancestors. His plot was discovered, and provision was made to meet and crush it. After a battle in the streets, his party was completely overcome, and though he managed to escape and save himself, several of his companions died on the gibbet or perished by the dagger.

To preserve the state from the recurrence of conspiracy by some method of constant and penetrating watchfulness, was now the concern of the rulers. The expedient they employed was the appointment of the famous Council of Ten. "Ten magistrates, named as a criminal court, were invested with a plenary inquisitorial authority, with an entire sovereignty over every individual in the state, and with freedom from all responsibility and appeal. Their duration at first was limited to ten days, but this was six times prolonged for a like period; then for a year, soon

after for five, next for ten; and in the end (1325) the tribunal, with a great extension of powers, was declared to be permanent. The ten officers, from whom the court derived its title, were chosen annually at four different assemblies of the grand council. No two of them might be members of the same family, or even bear the same name; and from the colour of their robes of ceremony they were termed *I Neri*, or the Black. To these, in after times, were added also the Seignory, as assessors, termed, for a like reason, *I Rossi*, the Red. In their judicial administration, the members of the council inquired, sentenced, and punished according to what they called reason of state. The public eye never penetrated the mystery of their proceedings; the accused was sometimes not heard, never confronted with witnesses; the condemnation was secret as the inquiry, the punishment undivulged like both. Nor was this all. Instituted solely for the cognizance of state crimes, this tribunal gradually attributed to itself the control of every branch of government, and exercised despotic influence over the questions of peace and war, over fiscal enactments, military arrangements, and negotiations with foreign powers. It annulled at pleasure the decrees of the grand council, degraded its members, deposed, and even put to death, the chief magistrate himself. An object alike of terror and detestation to those whom it oppressed under the pretext of salutary guardianship, it yet prolonged an uninterrupted sway during five centuries, and our wonder at the political

problem of its long-continued existence is not a little heightened when it is remembered that the grand council, upon which, of all other classes, it weighed with far the most grievous burden, might, by refusing its votes at any one of the four elections in each year, have abolished its hateful yoke for ever. That it did not do so may be attributed in the outset to a false view of the nature of magistracy, and to a full belief that it was necessary for the preservation of the state. As its tyranny became more distinctly manifest, it may have been protected by an ambitious but unworthy hope which each noble cherished of one day wielding its immense powers with his own hands. And lastly, after a lapse of years had so far interwoven it with the general polity as to make it seem an almost inseparable part of the whole, it might be saved by a mistaken, but little blamable reverence for antiquity—by that fond clinging to established institutions which, perhaps not unwisely, is backward to remove even an abuse, lest its extirpation may endanger the entire fabric upon which it is engrafted. We are here seeking a cause, not justifying a fact. Existence itself may be purchased at far too dear a price; but if existence alone were all that is demanded for the honour of a state and the happiness of its subjects, it might not be too much to affirm that the long stability of Venice was mainly owing to the most remarkable, the most formidable, the most execrable part of her government—the Council of Ten.”\*

\* Venetian History, vol. i. p. 232.

The constitution of Venice had become an oligarchy. Power in its substance belonged to the Ten—in its shadow only did it pertain to the doge. A proud citizen, occupying that office, must often have been irritated by the restraints to which he was compelled to submit. When Marino Faliero, a man of more than ordinary ambition and the slave of an impetuous temper, filled the ducal chair at Venice, it could not be wondered that he should feel impatient of the checks which in his official movements met him at every turn; but the story of the method he pursued for his liberation is certainly astonishing, both for its rashness and atrocity. He actually plotted the massacre of the nobles, and received and consulted with the intended assassins within the walls of his palace. Trifling incidents are alleged as the cause of this astounding conspiracy; but they were only drops making the full cup run over. He was offended by a pasquinade, fastened on the back of his chair, reflecting upon the fidelity of his young and beautiful wife. The punishment inflicted for this offence, consisting of two months' imprisonment and exile for a year, he deemed insufficient, and regarded it as a proof that the council, who tried the offender, were disposed to look leniently on whatever might depress the influence of the chief officer of state. Just afterwards, a person came to him, complaining of the insolence of the nobility, and fostered the indignation already rankling in his breast. These circumstances might bring to an issue the question how he was to emancipate



himself from the power of a despotic oligarchy, but the question had been long entertained, and was beginning already to shape for itself an answer. The result of secret meetings, in the very closet of the duke, was, that certain leaders should occupy appointed stations in the city, and raise a disturbance among the people, which would be a signal for tolling St. Mark's bell. The nobility, brought by the sound into the Piazza, were at once to be cut in pieces, and Marino Faliero proclaimed lord of Venice. As a stimulant to popular indignation against the nobility, and as a preparative for the coming deed of blood, it may be mentioned that the conspirators paraded the city at night, and offered insults to the wives and daughters of the citizens, calling themselves by noble names, so as to throw on the persons to whom the names really belonged the odium of the villany thus practised by the conspirators. Plots rarely succeed. Betrayal or compunction leads to discovery. The latter was the case now. One in the secret sought to save the life of his patron, and entreated him to stay at home when the bell should ring. This, of course, excited suspicion: suspicion led to inquiry, and inquiry, conducted as the council well knew how, soon secured a full revelation of the whole affair. Of course there was no difficulty with the minor malefactors—they were dispatched to the gibbet; but the case of the doge perplexed the rest of the government. How was he to be tried? How was he to be punished? The Council of Ten was reinforced by twenty

additional nobles, and the great culprit brought before them. The sentence was, that he should be beheaded on the top of the stone stairs in the quadrangle of the palace, where he had taken his oath of office. Accordingly, there he was executed, after which one of the Ten, with the executioner's bloody sword, repaired to the Piazza, exclaiming, "Justice has fallen on the traitor." The body of the headless doge was conveyed by torchlight to the church of San Giovanni and San Paolo; and over his grave was placed the inscription, "*Hic jacet Marinus Falierus, Dux.*" The empty frame among the portraits of the doges in their princely palace, is a memorial of this singular event to the present day, and thoughts of Venetian ambition and revenge pass through the mind of the visitor as he reads, "*Hic est locus Marini Falieri, decapitati pro criminibus.*" \*

Marino Faliero was the only doge who ever conspired against his own office, but many after him found the dignity a weary state, and the ducal cap a crown of thorns. One there was who wished to abdicate, but in vain, and his story forms another of the exciting chapters in the romantic annals of the republic. Francesco Foscari was doge for thirty-four years, commencing his reign in 1423. He had lost three sons; one only remained, Giacopo. The youth had become allied by marriage with the house of Contarini, and his nuptials had been graced with uncommon splendour. He was soon after

\* "This is the place of Marino Faliero, beheaded for his crimes."

this denounced to the Council of Ten as the receiver of presents from other powers. He was put to the rack in his father's presence, and a confession was extorted. His father was compelled to pronounce on his own son the sentence of banishment, and thus to surrender his last domestic joy to exile and dishonour. Shortly afterwards a murder was committed in the streets of Venice, and the victim was no less a personage than one of the Council of Ten. Poor young Giacompo was accused of employing his servant to do this deed in revenge for his own banishment. Consequently he was recalled, and put again to the rack under his old father's eyes. No acknowledgment could be forced, but his reason for a time was destroyed by his sufferings. Banished to Candia, he lingered on in sorrow, tormented by a passionate desire once more to see the country that had crushed him, but for which he cherished the most patriotic attachment. It was proved that the murder had been perpetrated without his knowledge, and by another person; but his exculpation brought neither deliverance nor relief. He determined to purchase another visit to Venice by a fresh transgression of the law against intercourse with foreign princes, though he knew it would be followed by a renewed endurance of the rack. He sent an open letter to the duke of Milan, which was intercepted. Called home for trial and judgment, he for the third time had his limbs dislocated on the instrument of torture, the doge his father being compelled again to behold

his agonies. Fresh sentence of exile was passed, and the young man went to Candia to return no more. The father perhaps was as great a sufferer as his son. He had wished to resign his cruel honours, but that favour had been denied. He had year after year to endure the torture of a throne, on which he had been compelled to act as the destroyer of his son. Now the council formally deposed him, and laying aside his ring and bonnet, he descended the marble stairs a private citizen. The bell of the Campanile soon announced his successor, and the fallen doge is said to have expired as its startling knell fell on his ears. The story runs, that all the sufferings of Foscari and his son were to gratify the revenge of Loredano, who accused the former of having assassinated his father and uncle, but without adducing any evidence in support of the accusation. He had long cherished a deadly resentment, and written down in his ledger among his list of debtors, "Francesco Foscari, for the death of my father and my uncle." When the doge was dethroned, the cold-blooded creditor wrote on the other side as a balance, "He has paid me."

During the reign of Foscari originated another instrument of Venetian oppression—the inquisition of state—which was vested in the hands of three individuals chosen by the Council of Ten. Two were of their own number, the third belonging to the council of the doge. To them were transferred for greater secrecy and dispatch the authority of the Ten; in fact, their power was supreme, unfettered, and irre-

sponsible. The most elaborate, intricate, and mysterious system of espionage was employed by these officers that the world perhaps ever knew. Their methods of vigilance and detection were so involved and circuitous as to baffle comprehension. Every ambassador was narrowly watched. So was every member of the nobility. Their most private transactions, their most intimate conversation, were accurately known. There were listeners in the Broglio where the merchants assembled, and ears unseen caught up the whispers of the private closet. Temptations to political crimes were even offered by the agents of government in order to test the fidelity of the subject and the friendship of the foreigner. A murder now and then, if it could help on purposes of state, was not only allowed, but enjoined as a duty. The execution of a judicial sentence was not always public, sometimes it was by poison, sometimes by drowning at night in the canal Orfano. Criminals were employed against criminals; but "so nicely shaded and graduated were the various species of possible offence, so delicately weighed and balanced were the proportions of contingent crime, that any one who engaged to arrest or assassinate an exile, could not be paid by grace accorded to another exile, unless the arrested or assassinated were equally guilty with his companion in banishment. Thus, also, if a banished state criminal sought pardon by proffering like services, the inquisitors were to determine whether the murdered were inferior or superior in guilt to the murderer; if the former, the assassin

might be rewarded, but he could by no means obtain an entire remission of punishment." \*

Such were the laws which, in the course of the period now under our consideration, were enacted in Venice, and they continued to influence the condition of the republic till its fall at the end of the last century. They are woven with more than usual closeness into the whole history of this remarkable people, and affected the posterity of those who made them beyond what is the common range of legislative power. No country had ever such a reverence for the wisdom of their ancestors as had the Venetians after completeness was given to their singular constitution. The character of each generation politically considered took the stamp of the preceding. The impression was stereotyped from age to age. In later times, the laws were not so much the reflection of the people's minds, as the people's minds were the reflection of their unalterable laws. They are ever present to the intelligent stranger who now visits the marble city of the Adriatic; indeed, the laws of Rome do not so recur to and impress the minds of travellers in walking through the Colosseum, as the laws of Venice do in a gondola on her canals. No recollection is more full of interest and wonder than the thought that here, through these canals, there used once to glide, and up those marble steps there used once to walk, the very men who fashioned and maintained a form of government the most despotic and stable that the world ever knew.

\* Venetian History, vol. ii. p. 108.

But we must turn from this sketch of the constitutional history of Venice to note the progress of its relations, conflicts, and possessions during this, the midday of its prosperity and power. In a former chapter was seen how great were the territories of the republic at the beginning of the thirteenth century. She was indeed queen of the Adriatic, and seemed almost entitled to claim the sceptre of the Mediterranean. There was, however, another maritime power which had also an ambition to wield the sovereignty of the sea, and it is no matter of surprise that between two such rivals there at length broke out fierce animosities. The first war between Venice and Genoa arose out of comparatively trifling circumstances, but it was the explosion of a mine in which a train had been long laid. The Venetians triumphed in this first encounter, and three other wars followed at different periods, with various results. Other enemies also arose to grapple with the pride of Venice; and Milan, Hungary, and Padua measured their swords with her. The loss of Dalmatia in 1355 was the result of war with the Hungarian nation, and this reverse in the fortunes of the republic encouraged a revolt on the part of Candia, a dependency which had been ever indisposed towards the state under whose sway it was reduced. But Candia was chastised for her restlessness, and there followed triumphant festivities in the conquering city, of which Petrarch gives graphic sketches in his Epistles. A galley, dressed with green boughs, brought the news of victory, and all the popu-

lation flocked to the water's edge to welcome it. The doge and court went to St. Mark's to offer up thanks, and then there followed festivals and a tournament. The grandees of Venice, with their prince amongst them, occupied the marble gallery over the porch of the church, under the shade of a gorgeous canopy, and on the right-hand side were the noblest dames of Venice, in the costliest array; while before them all there were encounters in arms for a crown of solid gold, which was won by a knight of the republic against the flower of the neighbouring provinces. The fourth war of Venice with Genoa began in 1376, and the latter power had for her allies, in this desperate struggle, both the king of Hungary, and the lords of Padua and Verona. Never had Venice before seen such days as now came over her. The Genoese fleet sailed up the Adriatic, and bearded the lion of St. Mark. Chiozza fell. It seemed, indeed, as if the capital itself was about to fall. Amazing efforts were made for self-defence, for it was a matter of life or death, inasmuch as the cry in the Genoese fleet had passed from ship to ship, "To Venice!—to Venice!—Viva San Giorgio!" Amidst the utmost terror, the citizens demanded the liberation of their admiral Pisani, who had been imprisoned, and showed that they were themselves prepared to make the greatest sacrifices. Whole fortunes were surrendered, debts were remitted, costly plate was given. Ecclesiastics took up arms. Those who had nothing else to give, gave themselves and children. "If my estate," said a towns-



man of Chiozza, who had been bereft of all, "were such as I once possessed, all of it should be contributed to the public exigencies; but life is now the only property which is left to me, and to these. Dispose of it as you think best. Employ us either by land or sea, and gladden us by a consciousness that what little we still retain is devoted to our country." Pisani attempted the recovery of Chiozza, and gained some advantage over the Genoese. Contarini, the doge, after hearing mass at St. Mark's, embarked on a clear December night on an expedition to support Pisani. They blockaded the straits, and they with difficulty kept their foes at bay, but could do nothing further. The great Venetian admiral Carlo Zeno was away with his fleet, and how did his countrymen long for his return. At length distant sails were seen coming up the Adriatic. "Napoleon did not inquire more anxiously whether it was the cannon of Grouchey or Blucher which pealed in the distance on the evening of that great day which despoiled him of his crown, than the Venetians sought to ascertain whether the approaching squadron were that of friend or foe." It proved to be Zeno. Bloody engagements followed. Chiozza was recovered, and Venice was saved. Both Genoa and Venice were wearied out with this war, and even glad to enter into a treaty of peace, leaving matters in very much the same state as they were at the commencement of the conflict.

But soon afterwards a new career of territorial aggrandizement began; for before the end

of the fourteenth century the islands of Corfu, Argos, and Napoli di Romania were induced to place themselves under the protection and authority of the republic. Vicenza and Verona were her next acquisitions, to which were soon added the province of Friuli. Thus, from the Julian Alps to the Adige and the Mincio, embracing what was called "the Old Venetian Terra Ferma," the sway of the island city was extended, and again she enlarged her dominion by obtaining Brescia, Bergamo, and Crema as the fruit of a war with Milan. These provinces were called the *Oltre Mincio*. Wars with the Turks occurred in the middle of the fifteenth century, which ended in a peace, securing liberty to trade in the ports of the Black Sea, at the cost, however, of a large indemnity. Another possession fell into the hands of Venice in a peculiar way. Giacopo Lusignano, who had usurped the crown of Cyprus, married Catarina, a Venetian lady of the family of the Cornaro. This was contrary to the laws of the Venetian state; but the government, calculating upon the advantages of the alliance, considered that they evaded the statute of prohibition by calling the lady a daughter of St. Mark, and marrying her by proxy in the presence of the doge. The king of Cyprus died not long after his marriage, leaving a posthumous heir. The child expired in infancy, but Catarina continued to fill the throne amidst much opposition. Venice, however, kept her eye on the beautiful isle as a desirable pearl to be placed in the ducal bonnet,

and fifteen years after the death of Catarina's husband, asserted a title to dominion on the following ingenious principle—that the son of Lusignano inherited the crown from his father, that Catarina inherited the crown from her son, and that Venice inherited the crown from Catarina, the adopted daughter of St. Mark. By these various means the republic was placed in possession of an immense territory at the commencement of the sixteenth century. Dalmatia, Istria, and part of Albania, Candia, Eubœa, and the Morea, Cyprus, and several of the Ionian and Archipelagan Isles ; these, together with the extensive region in northern Italy already indicated, owned the sovereignty of the Venetian government.

Venice was rich in territory, but it was richer in commerce. It had factories in the Levant and in Egypt, and St. Mark's flag was met with all over the Mediterranean. First the carriers of the Crusades, the ships from the Lagune became eventually the principal carriers of the merchandise of Europe. Internal or colonial manufactures supplied them also with large and numerous cargoes. The silk-weaver plied his loom on the banks of the canals, and made materials for the robes, not only of Venetian nobles, but of the noble and wealthy of other lands. Fleeces from the hills of Spain and the valleys of England, with flax from the plains of Lombardy, were woven by the hands of her industrious children or the artisans of her tributary cities on the mainland, into cloth and linen for European consumption, as well as

for her own. Manufactories of glass, confectionary, and waxen tapers—no inconsiderable article of commerce in the middle ages—were numerous in her clustered isles. The Venetian distilleries were very famous; medicines prepared by Venetian chemists were held to be of most potent virtue. Samito states that “the value of goods exported in one year was ten millions of ducats, upon which the profits amounted to four millions, showing how large was the rate of profit obtained by these Italian merchants. Their houses were valued at seven millions, which yielded an annual rental of five hundred thousand ducats. They had three thousand vessels, carrying seventeen hundred seamen, and three hundred more ships, with forty-five galleys, manned by nineteen thousand sailors. Sixteen thousand carpenters worked in their dockyards. Their mint coined annually a million ducats of gold, two hundred thousand pieces of silver, and eighty thousand solidi. Fifty thousand ducats were sent to Egypt and Syria, in payment for their merchandise, and one hundred thousand to England. They paid weekly to the Florentines seven thousand ducats for Catalonian wool, crimson, and grain, silk, gold, and silver, thread, wax, sugar, and violins. From the Milanese dominions they drew a million ducats in coin, and the value of nine hundred thousand more in cloth, on which they reckoned the profit at six hundred thousand ducats.”\* These figures supply some definite conception of the extensive

\* *Scriptores Rer. Ital.* tome xxii. p. 958.

trade and abundant wealth of this modern Tyre, which far surpassed her ancient type, and gave reality to the fairy pictures of her greatness which gleam on us so brightly from the page of poetry.\*

The progress of art kept pace with the increase of wealth. Many of the architectural and other artistic beauties of Venice belong to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Then were wrought some of the finest of the Mosaics which adorn the church of St. Mark. The arsenal, which celebrates the power of Venice in the east, was completed at the commencement of the former period. Before its close the present ducal palace was begun. The churches of San Zaccaria, San Michele Murano, and Sta. Maria de' Miracoli, were the work of the next century.† On the Grand Canal, too, in some of the still existing palaces—for instance, the Foscari and Pisani—specimens may be seen of the style and skill of the Venetian architects in the last two centuries of the mediæval age. The buildings referred to, bearing the manifest traces of Byzantine taste, giving an oriental cast of splendour to the old city, carrying away the imagination to Constantinople and Egypt, help us to conceive what Venice must have been during the reign of her greatest territorial magnificence and political power. They supply a background to the romantic pictures of the times, and we see, pacing along the Piazza, or floating

\* Dawn of Modern Civilization, a previous volume, 18 in this series.

† Venise, par Jules le Comte, p. 34.

down the canals, the noble in his robe of Paduan cloth, a costume prescribed by her sumptuary laws, with under-garments of flowered silk or gold brocade, which an ingenious vanity managed to display to advantage.

Perhaps nothing could be more appropriately selected in order to give a lively idea of Venetian splendour in the fifteenth century, than the account of the visit of the emperor Frederic III., and the narrative of Comines, detailing a description of his own embassy to the great republic. The Bucentaur, or doge's state barge, of gold and divers colours, bearing a canopy of gay silk flags, and attended by a long train of richly-decked gondolas, came forth to meet his imperial majesty, who was entertained in the city by a course of festivities. A golden crown, set with jewels, was presented to the empress, who on this occasion accompanied her lord; indeed, they were but newly married, and were returning from their coronation; and there was added a costly mantle and a purple cradle coverlid for the expected heir. A curious incident occurred, illustrative of Venetian manufactures and imperial manners. Among the gifts presented to Frederic was a splendid service of glass, from Murano—a production quite unique and very beautiful. . . . Expecting a gift of more costly material, he had the impudence to set his jester upon overturning the table, as if by accident, dashing, of course, the brittle and ingenious fabrics into a thousand fragments. “Had they been of gold or silver,” he re-

marked, "they would not have been thus easily broken." Philip Comines glowingly describes his reception at Fusina by five-and-twenty gentlemen in silk and scarlet; and a second reception at Andrea by an equal number of grave personages, similarly clad, where he was ushered into a gondola, covered with crimson satin and emblazoned with arms. "Sure, in my opinion," he says, on entering the canal, "it is the goodliest street in the world, and the best built, and reacheth in length from one end of the town to the other. Their buildings are high and stately, and all of fine stone. The ancient houses be all painted; but the rest, that have been built within these hundred years, have their front all of white marble, brought hither out of Istria, an hundred miles thence, and are beautified with many great pieces of porphyry and serpentine. In the most part of them are at the least two chambers, the ceiling whereof is gilded; the mantle-trees of the chimneys very rich—to wit, of graven marble; the bedsteads gilded; the presses painted and vermeiled with gold, and marvellously well furnished with stuff. To be short, it is the most triumphant city that ever I saw, and where ambassadors and strangers are most honourably entertained."

Comines went as ambassador of Charles VIII. of France, then engaged in his Italian expedition; and he gives the following glimpse of the interior of the palace, when it was announced to the Venetian magnates that Naples had been reduced by the French arms:—"I found fifty or sixty of them assembled together in the

duke's chamber, who lay sick of the colic. He told me the news with a cheerful countenance ; but none of the rest could dissemble so cunningly as himself, for some of them sat upon a low bench, leaning upon their elbows ; others, some after one sort and others after another, their outward countenances betraying their inward grief. None of them once looked upon me ; none of them gave me one good look but the duke alone, so that I wondered to behold them."

A league was arranged between Venice, Spain, Germany, and Milan, against France, and Comines was summoned to the ducal palace to hear the tidings. The narrative gives us a curious picture of diplomacy, and of the unscrupulous mode in which Comines himself was ready to tamper with the truth. "They were assembled," he tells us, "to the number of one hundred or more, and looked up with cheerful countenances, and sat, not as they did the day they advertised me of the taking of the castle of Naples. I was marvellously troubled with this news, for I stood in doubt both of the king's person and of all his company, supposing their army to have been readier than indeed it was, as did themselves also. I feared, further, lest the Germans had been at hand, and not without cause, for if they had, undoubtedly the king had never departed out of Italy. I was resolved not to speak much in this heat, but they so provoked me that I was forced to change my mind ; and then I said unto them, that both the night before, and divers other



times, I had advertised the king of their league, and that he also had sent me word that he had intelligence thereof both from Rome and Milan. They all looked marvellously strange upon me when I said that I had advertised the king before ; for there is no nation under the sun so suspicious as they, nor so secret in their affairs, so that oftentimes they banish men upon suspicion only, for the which cause I said thus much unto them."

Towards the close of the time embraced within this chapter, the revival of learning in Europe had made extensive progress, and the art of printing was widely practised. Venice is honourably distinguished in connexion with the history, both of literature and of the ingenious invention by which it has been preserved and multiplied. Aldus Manutius, a stranger from the papal states, took up his residence at Venice. He was imbued with the love of books, and was skilful in printing them. He invented a new character for his types, since so well known by the name of "*italics*;" and combining the scholar with the mechanic, he drew to his house in Venice some of the chief literati of the day, while from his workshop went forth editions of classical authors, distinguished by the accuracy of the text and the elegance of the typography. The Neacademia, as it was called—one of the famous literary institutes of that age, founded by himself, met at his house ; and such men as Bembo, Sanuto, Forteguerra, and Erasmus, might be seen entering within the doors of this accomplished

man. "Not only amicable discussions, but the choice of books to be printed, of manuscripts, and various readings, occupied their time ; so that they may be considered as literary partners of the noble-minded printer."\* The *principes editiones* of Pindar, Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Herodotus, Thucydides, Demosthenes, Plato, and Aristotle, are owing to the labours of Aldus, besides editions of other works admirably executed. The first of his books at Venice was published about 1490. He died in the city of his adoption, 1515. "It would be difficult to say, whether the exertions of any individual, however splendid his talents, or even the labours of any particular association or academy, however celebrated, ever shed so much lustre on the place of their residence as that which Venice derives from the reputation of a stranger, who voluntarily selected it for his abode."† We must avow our participation in this sentiment, and record the greater pleasure we have felt in our rambles through Venice, when thinking of the toils of Aldus for the mental culture of mankind, than in recalling the dukes, captains, and merchants of the republic, with their associations of war and wealth.

The condition of the Venetian people requires our notice, and a compressed view of it in the fifteenth century cannot be better conveyed than in the words of Sismondi:—"Their suffrages were never demanded ; their voice was

\* Hallam's Literature, vol. i. p. 354.

† Eustace's Classical Tour, vol. i. p. 106.

never heard ; they never thought even of questioning the wisdom of their government. But the senate, far wiser in its administration than the tyrants of Lombardy, never allowed their subjects to bear any other burdens than those imposed by itself, and those were always moderate, always equally distributed in a spirit of justice. All that the Venetian paid the state was employed scrupulously and with economy, either for the common defence, or for the ornament of their country. The government cost the people nothing. The people themselves looked with pride upon the employment of their money in the public works. The provinces of the Terra Ferma were carefully secured from the vexations of the soldier, and as much as possible from the invasion of the enemy. The city of Venice, from the period of its foundation, had never been invaded, had never seen the Rialto soiled by the feet of foreign armies, had never suffered even the temporary domination of a tyrant. The riches of commerce and industry, fostered by such constant security, had grown beyond all precedent. The provinces of the Terra Ferma, forgetting all pretension to independence, found themselves happy by comparison with their neighbours. The peasantry in particular were ready to give their lives for St. Mark. It was thus they always designated the state. The only possessions of the republic that had reason to complain were those of the Levant ; there the Venetian merchants sacrificed their industry to the narrow spirit of monopoly."\*

\* *Italian Republics*, p. 221.

In closing this chapter, we insert an illustration of the superstitious character of the age, as shown in one of the most famous legends of Venice, commemorated in numerous pictures, and even by a religious ceremony. "In the year 1341, an inundation of many days' continuance had raised the water three cubits higher than it had ever before been seen in Venice; and during a stormy night, while the flood appeared to be still increasing, a poor old fisherman sought what refuge he could find by mooring his crazy bark close to the Riva di San Marco. The storm was yet raging, when a person approached, and offered him a good fare if he would but ferry him over to San Giorgio Maggiore. 'Who,' said the fisherman, 'can reach San Giorgio on such a night as this?' But as the stranger earnestly persisted in his request, and promised to guard him from harm, he at last consented. The passenger landed, and having desired the boatman to wait a little, returned with a companion, and ordered him to row to San Nicolo di Lido. The astonished fisherman again refused, till he was prevailed upon by a further confident assurance of safety and excellent pay. At San Nicolo they picked up a third person, and then instructed the boatman to proceed to the Two Castles at Lido. Though the waves ran fearfully high, the old man by this time had become accustomed to them; and, moreover, there was something about his mysterious crew which either silenced his fears or diverted them from the tempest to his companions. Scarcely

had they gained the strait when they saw a galley, rather flying than sailing along the Adriatic, manned, if we may so say, with devils, who seemed hurrying, with fierce and threatening gestures, to sink Venice in the deep. The sea, which had hitherto been furiously agitated, in a moment became unruffled, and the strangers, crossing themselves, conjured the fiends to depart. At the word, the demoniacal galley vanished, and the three passengers were quietly landed at the spots at which each had respectively been taken up. The boatman, it seems, was not quite easy about his fare, and before parting he implied pretty clearly that the sight of this miracle after all would be but bad pay. 'You are right, my friend,' said the first passenger; 'go to the doge and the procurati, and assure them that but for us three Venice would have been drowned. I am St. Mark, my two companions are St. George and St. Nicholas. Desire the magistrates to pay you.' The fisherman, who seems to have had all his wits about him, answered that he might tell that story, but he much doubted whether he should be believed; upon which St. Mark pulled from his finger a gold ring, worth about five ducats, saying, 'Show them this ring, and bid them look for it in my treasury, whence it will be found missing.' On the morrow the fisherman did as he was told. The ring was discovered to be absent from its usual custody, and the boatman not only received his fare but an annual pension to boot. Moreover, a solemn procession and

thanksgiving were appointed in gratitude to the 'three holy corpses' that had rescued from such calamity the land affording them burial."

Such was one of the many stories, full of superstition, believed in Venice in the middle ages, and perhaps not disbelieved to the present day. The Venetians—victims of an insatiable credulity in reference to all wonderful narratives which exalted their republic and city as the favourite and beneath the guardian care of Heaven—gave a ready and reverent credence to the legend just recorded; and we doubtless form a picture of a common scene in Venetian life, and discover a specimen of the aliment on which they fed their thoughts, as we fancy some damsel at the marble balcony of her father's palace at nightfall, with the moon rising over the canal, listening to the story, or some old fisherman telling it to his children in his hut by the Lagune, as the winter's wind and heavy rain beat against the frail casement.

## CHAPTER IV.

## ITS DECLINE.

THE prosperous and the proud are sure ever to make enemies. This is true of states as well as individuals. Venice was no exception. She bore the character: she met the destiny. At the commencement of the sixteenth century, the emperor and the pope, with the kings of France and Spain, formed a league against the republic, well known in history as the League of Cambray. The motives of the allies have been differently stated; but it is probable that the chief was, as we are told by the biographer of Bayard, "to ruin the seignory of Venice, which, in great pomp and little regard to God, lived gloriously and gorgeously, making small account of the other princes of Christendom." Into the details of that memorable conflict it does not come within the scope of this little volume to enter, beyond the glimpse they give of a scene in Venice in the year 1509. The battle of Agnadello was most disastrous for Venice. Its territories on *terra firma* were lost, half its army perished, and the rest were

crippled. The conquerors approached the Lagune; and the terror, courage, and energy of the time when Chiozza was taken, returned in their vividness and force. Venice never appeared so great, never so displayed the resources she had in herself, as when she seemed on the brink of ruin. The shops, indeed, were closed, business was stopped, bargains on the Broglia ceased, the merchant's counting-house was deserted, the people rushed in dismay to the doge's palace, the Giant's Staircase and the gallery were filled with tumultuous crowds, the door of the council chamber was besieged; but within sat the council in calm heroism and hope, devising methods for the preservation of the state. A sick old man, one of the senate, was borne through the press on a litter to the hall of assembly, and there guided and strengthened his brethren by counsel and exhortation. It was resolved that the city should prepare itself to stand a siege. Measures were taken accordingly. The granary and the mill were looked to, that there might be no lack of bread; wells were sunk and tanks cleansed, that there might be no want of water; canals were blockaded, and patrols set on the frontier isles, to shut out and watch the invader. Venice attempted negotiation, first with the pope, then with the emperor, in the midst of which Padua, which had fallen into the hands of the imperial troops, roused itself to resistance, and, by the help of the remains of the Venetian army, shook off its new yoke and slew its masters. Venice was overjoyed at the recovery



of Padua. A festival now took the place of former scenes of mourning and consternation. The emperor's inability to retake the dependent city, which he again besieged, and an alteration in the pope's feelings towards his allies, changed the fortunes of the republic. The League of Cambray was dissolved, and Venice regained her continental possessions, with the exception of Romagna.

Instead of following the history of Venice in its record of wars with Turkey, in which it lost its dominion in the Morea and the islands of the Archipelago, only saving Candia from the wreck, we shall for the present confine ourselves to the internal history of the republic, and introduce the reader to some domestic events, entirely passed over by most historians.

The cause of the Reformation, in its earlier stages, found favour in Venice. Luther's writings were read there soon after their publication, and the reformer, in 1528, observes to a friend, "You give me joy by what you write of the Venetians receiving the word of God. To him be the thanks and the glory." It is very refreshing to read in the letter of a Venetian, Lucio Paolo Rosselli, addressed to Melancthon, the following noble sentiments: "In this cause you ought to regard neither emperor nor pope, nor any other mortal, but the immortal God only. If there be any truth in what the papists circulate about you, the worst consequences must accrue to the gospel and to those who have been led to embrace it through your instrumentality and that of Luther.

Be assured that all Italy waits with anxiety for the result of your assembly at Augsburg. Whatever is determined by it will be embraced by Christians in other countries through the authority of the emperor. It behoves you and others who are there for the purpose of defending the gospel, to be firm, and not to suffer yourselves to be either frightened from the standard of Christ by threats, or drawn from it by entreaties and promises. I implore and obtest you, as the head and leader of the whole evangelical army, to regard the salvation of every individual. Though you should be called to suffer death for the glory of Christ, fear not, I besecch you; it is better to die with honour than to live in disgrace. You shall secure a glorious triumph from Jesus Christ if you defend his righteous cause; and in doing this you may depend on the aid of the prayers and supplications of many who day and night entreat Almighty God to prosper the cause of the gospel, and to preserve you and its other champions through the blood of his Son. Farewell, and desert not the cause of Christ." \*

The evangelical principles of the Reformation made such way in Venice between the years 1530 and 1542, that those who had adopted them, meeting, hitherto, in private for instruction and worship, began to think of publicly organizing themselves into religious congregations; and it is stated that members of the senate were considered so favourable to the measure as to induce a hope that the shield of the

\* Mc Crie's Reformation in Italy, p. 120.

law would be spread over it. But we are compelled to add, that anti-Trinitarian sentiments were entertained by some of the Venetians who were favourable to the Reformation, a fact which, however deplorable, may be accounted for by the tendency to rash speculation which characterized many of the thoughtful Italians of that age, the result not only of the study of a sceptical philosophy, but of that re-action of mind which naturally ensued from the long bondage of the human intellect under the ecclesiastical despotism of Rome.

Some of the leading principles of the Reformers were adopted by men who still maintained communion with Rome, though lamenting its corruptions and anxious for reform. Most persons who have visited Venice well remember the magnificent palace of the Contarini on the Grand Canal. A distinguished member of the house, whose name it bears, and a cardinal in the Roman church, was an eminent member of the class just referred to. Cardinal Pole, who at one time shared with him in his sentiments, described him as ignorant of nothing that the human mind could discover by its own research, or that Divine grace had revealed, and that he crowned his knowledge with virtue. Among the groves and thickets which surrounded the monastery of San Giorgio Maggiore, at Venice—on the site of which there now stands the modern church of that name—there used to be held, at the time of the Reformation, literary and theological conversations between the learned men of Venice. The abbot Gregorio Cortese

was a member, and within those bowers were then probably expressed to curious and critical, but not wholly unconvinced listeners, those Scriptural truths which lie imbedded in the works of Gaspar Contarini. In his book on Justification, he holds substantially the doctrine of Luther; and, in reference to it, Pole said, Papist as he was, "You have brought to light the jewel which the church kept half-concealed," and denominated it a "holy, fruitful, indispensable truth." The following are the words of the Venetian cardinal: "The gospel is no other than the blessed tidings that the only begotten Son of God, clad in our flesh, hath made satisfaction for us to the justice of the eternal Father. He who believes this enters into the kingdom of God; he enjoys the universal pardon; from a carnal he becomes a spiritual creature; from a child of wrath a child of grace; he lives in a sweet peace of conscience."\* How nearly Contarini approached to Protestantism on this point is further apparent from the words of Pole, who spoke of the treatise as laying a foundation for agreement with the Protestants, such a foundation as illustrated the glory of Christ—the foundation of all Christian doctrine which was not well understood by many. Nor did Contarini, though an advocate for a modified papacy, scruple boldly to speak of that institution as it was: "It is idolatrous to say that the pope, in the matter of dispensations, hath no rule for the enactment or abolition of positive law but his own will. The law of Christ is a

\* Quoted in Ranke's History of the Popes, vol. i. p. 139.

law of liberty, and forbiddeth a slavery so gross that the Lutherans are fully justified in comparing it to the Babylonish captivity." Another Venetian of that day, Angelo Buonarici, the general of the canons regular in the city, expresses with even still more precision than Contarini, the Scriptural doctrine of justification by faith: "If we are true Christians, we must acknowledge that we are saved and justified, without the previous works of the law, by means of faith alone. Not that we are to conclude that those who believe in Christ are not bound and obliged to study the practice of holy, devout, and good works; but no one must think or believe that he can attain to the benefit of justification by good works, for this is indeed obtained by faith—and good works in the justified do not precede but follow their justification." Strange to say, the work containing this passage received the sanction of the inquisitors of Venice. There were other Venetians who held similar views, and beautiful is it to think of these bright rays of spiritual truth falling upon their minds. In our estimation, such associations with Venice are amongst the most elevating to which her past history points, inasmuch as these truths, which were apprehended by some in fellowship with Rome, and openly preached and promulgated by those who left that fellowship, infinitely transcend, in interest and importance, all that is merely secular. But sorrow dashes the joy in reference to the enlightened class which Contarini and others represent, when it is recollected that they lived

and died in a corrupt communion, and helped to resist the progress of truth they believed, by their clinging, for the most part, to two maxims expressed, the first by Pole, the second by Cortese: "Every man should be satisfied with his own inward convictions, without troubling himself greatly whether errors and abuses exist in the church." "No corruption can be so great as to justify a defection from the sacred union."

The men at Venice who followed the light they had, and which led them into conscientious opposition to the church of Rome, were soon to find the arm of unjust and cruel laws stretched forth against them. The papal Inquisition, though not without resistance from the republic, was instituted in Venice. The fearful results are apparent from the following extract from a letter written by Alterius to Bullinger, on the 24th of March, 1549: "The persecution here increases every day. Many are seized, of whom some have been sent to the galleys, others condemned to perpetual imprisonment, and some, alas! have been induced, by fear of punishment, to recant. Many have been banished along with their wives and children; while still greater numbers have fled for their lives. Matters are brought to that pass, that I begin to fear for myself; for though I have frequently been able to protect others from the storm, there is reason to apprehend that the same hard terms will be proposed to me; but it is the will of God that his people be tried by such afflictions." At length he chose "exile rather

than the enjoyment of pleasant Venice with its execrable religion."

Many for a while eluded the search of the inquisitorial court. The Protestants even met together for the celebration of the Lord's supper; but at length their place of resort being discovered, they broke up their meetings, and a party of twenty-three arranged to leave the city for some foreign land. Just as they were about to sail, three of them were detained under pretence of a claim for debt, and the charge of heresy being afterwards preferred against them, they were committed to prison. Up to this time capital punishment had not been inflicted for heresy in the Venetian state: now the senate yielded to the councils of Rome, and subjects of the republic, guilty of the crime of Protestantism, were put to death. The characteristic secrecy of Venetian proceedings, under the name of justice, marked these cruel and atrocious acts, and at the midnight hour the gondola glided away from the prison water-gate, bearing some doomed victim to the Two Castles, where a couple of gondolas were found side by side with a wooden plank between. The prisoner, chained and loaded heavily with a stone fastened to his feet, was placed on the plank, when the boats, withdrawn from each other, left him to fall into a watery grave. So perished Julio Guirlanda, cheerfully bidding the captain farewell as he was led forth to the place of martyrdom, and calling upon the name of the Lord Jesus as he sank into the waves. Antonio Ricetto met the like fate, after una-

vailing attempts had been made to induce him to recant. Even the cries and entreaties of his beloved child, a boy of twelve years old, who visited him in prison, could not move his purpose, though they crushed his heart; and in the gondola and on the plank he remained invincible, praying for his murderers, and commending his soul to the Redeemer. A still more distinguished martyr was the venerable Fra Baldo Lupetino, who for twenty years lingered in one of the dungeons of Venice. "Two things," says his nephew, in an account preserved of him in a book now very scarce, "may be mentioned as marks of the singular providence of God towards this person during his imprisonment. In the first place, the princes of Germany often interceded for his liberation, but without success; and secondly, on the other hand, the papal legate, the inquisitor, and even the pope himself, laboured with all their might, and by repeated applications, to have him, from the very first, committed to the flames as a noted heresiarch. This was refused by the doge and senate, who, when he was at last condemned, freed him from the punishment of the fire by an express decree. It was the will of God that he should bear his testimony for the truth for so long a time, and that, like a person affixed to a cross, he should, as from an eminence, proclaim to all the world the restoration of Christianity and the revelation of antichrist. At last this pious and excellent man, whom neither threatenings nor promises could move, sealed his doctrine by an undaunted



martyrdom, and exchanged the filth and protracted tortures of a prison for a watery grave."

"We have good reason to think that many others, whose names have not come down to us, suffered the same death at Venice, besides those who perished by diseases contracted during a tedious and unwholesome imprisonment. Among the latter was Jeronimo Galateo, who evinced his constancy in the faith by enduring a rigorous confinement of ten years. It may naturally be supposed that these violent measures would scatter the Protestants in Venice; and yet we learn that they had secret meetings for worship in the seventeenth century distinct from those which the ambassadors of Protestant states were permitted to hold."\*

Upon turning from this brief notice of the Reformation as it regarded Venice, but still keeping our attention fixed upon the internal history of the city and republic, it is proper to notice, at least in passing, the establishment of an institute, in 1521, by one of the senators, which tended to mitigate the miseries which had resulted from the ruinous war in which the state had been involved. Many orphans flocked to Venice to seek shelter and support from the people in whose service their fathers had lost their lives. Girolamo Urino, the senator referred to, collected together a number of these helpless sufferers, and provided for them in his own house; and, though opposed by his sister-in-law, he sacrificed his ornaments, even the silver utensils from his table and the

\* Mc Crie.

tapestry from his walls, that he might have the means of clothing, feeding, and instructing the forlorn little fugitives. All the energies of this benevolent man were devoted to the work, and having succeeded in Venice, he extended his efforts to Bergamo and several other cities, founding in each of them a monument of his self-denying charity.

The state of the arts in Venice during the sixteenth century especially requires some account in this chapter, as it signalized the period more than anything else in its secular history. Indeed, so great were the efforts made in adorning the city during the thirty years' peace which succeeded the Turkish war, and so very numerous and magnificent are the monuments of that era still remaining, that it is very natural to suppose that it must have been the most prosperous in its annals. But it is evident that Venice had sustained a tremendous shock by the League of Cambray; moreover, her territories were materially diminished, her monopoly of trade, too, had been destroyed, heavy tolls were imposed upon her ships in the Egyptian ports by the Turks after the war, and still further, the discovery of a new passage to India round the Cape by a Portuguese adventurer, though overrated in its damaging effect on the republic, was certainly drawing away some of her old and profitable traffic; and what is not often noticed, the salt works, which from the beginning had been her sole property, and a mine of vast wealth, were now shared by the pope. These are circumstances which show

that Venice had fallen somewhat from the zenith of her greatness in the fifteenth century. Her subsequent history shows that she had only begun a downward career. Still the age which immediately succeeded the turning-point of her fortunes for the worse, was pre-eminent in the display of artistic grandeur. It was a season of peace, and her exchequer was relieved from the drains of war. It was an epoch of genius, and her own gifted sons and those of other countries stood ready to adorn the beautiful city of their birth or sojourn. It was an age, perhaps, of more than common pride, for pride like that of Venice grows afresh, and lifts up its head anew, and higher than before, after temporary disaster and mortification. However that might be, the Mint, the library of St. Mark, some of the most beautiful work in bronze and marble which adorns the Duomo, the south side of the Piazza with its fine arcade, the noble statues of Mars and Neptune at the top of the Giant's Staircase, emblematical of the military and naval glories of the republic, were all the production of the great Sansovino between the years 1527 and 1578.\* To him also belongs the church of San Giorgio de' Greci, and from a plan of his, it is said, the church of San Francesco della Vigna was built. The Palazzo Manin and the Palazzo Comaro à San Maurizio were also designed by the same skilful hand. The castle Andrea on the Lido, and the palaces

\* He did not succeed well with the vaulted ceiling of the library of St. Mark, for it fell down soon after its completion, in consequence of which the architect was thrown into prison. He was afterwards restored to office.

of Grimani and others were raised by Sanmicheli between 1541 and 1571; but the buildings of Palladio in the Italian style are the best known edifices of the age. Il Redentore and San Giorgio Maggiore, so prominently visible from the Piazzetta, are among the master-pieces of that celebrated architect, who was so largely patronised by the Venetians from 1561 to 1579.

But in the history of Venetian art at the period under consideration, a still more illustrious name occurs, which requires an ampler notice. Titian was a native of Friuli, a district subject to Venice and lying to the north of the city, and there it was that he gave to his childhood a sort of poetical foreshadowing of his subsequent eminence as a colourist, by painting the figure of a Madonna with juice which he squeezed from flowers. A considerable portion of his life was spent in Venice, whose churches and other buildings he adorned with the productions of his wonderful pencil. He lived in a house opposite the island of Murano, enjoying the splendour which his success as an artist enabled him to procure. He held an office under the government in the Fondaca de' Tedeschi—now the Dogana near the Rialto—the front of which was ornamented with frescoes by his own hand. The salary was small, yet, in consideration of the appointment, the economical rulers of Venice agreed with Titian that he should paint the portraits of the doges in the Sala del Maggior Consiglio, at eight crowns a head. With more liberality and respect for artistic excellence, when the republic levied a

poll tax for the Turkish war, Titian and his friend Sansovino were expressly exempted from the burden of the levy. We have not space here to enumerate the pictures by this great master still preserved in Venice—some of them will be noticed hereafter—but it may be mentioned as a proof of the long-continued vigour of his genius, that he painted his fine picture of St. Lawrence when he was eighty-one. His love for the art, however, survived his powers of execution, for in his ninetieth year he would still paint; and when, in his picture of the Annunciation, he showed that his hand failed, and some one observed that it was impossible to believe that a work so inferior was his, the old man, unconscious of decay, and jealous of his honour, wrote on it the emphatic words, "*Titianus fecit—fecit.*" Titian died of the plague, which broke out in Venice in 1575, and though the law required that every one who fell a victim to the pestilence should be removed from the place, the citizens, anxious to retain the dust of one so illustrious, set aside the statute in his case, and had his remains interred in the church of Santa Maria de' Frari. Tintoretto and Paul Veronese were contemporaries with Titian, and contributed to adorn Venice with celebrated compositions. The marvellous industry of the former must strike every one who visits the Venetian churches and public buildings, for in all directions his pictures, some of amazing size, meet the eye, producing very various criticism between the extremes of intense admiration and severe censure.

Though the palmy days of Venetian art belong to the age of Sansovino Palladio and Titian, zeal for the embellishment of the city continued long afterwards. Much of the interior of the ducal palace was consumed in 1577, after which it was re-erected in its present form, presenting an unique combination of buildings—courts, arcades, and galleries of the gay Italian style, within a grave and stern encasement of Byzantine architecture. The completion of the Piazza di San Marco, and the construction of the present bridge of the Rialto, with its graceful arch, upon which Venice has ever since prided herself, also belong to the end of the sixteenth century. The prisons connected with the doge's palace by the famous Bridge of Sighs are of the same general date. The church of Santa Maria della Salute was erected in 1630, in commemoration of the deliverance of the city from another fearful visitation of the plague.

The design of this work, as well as our limited space, requires that we should be content with a very cursory notice indeed of the foreign affairs, and the changes in the territorial possessions of Venice. We have already seen that the Turkish war, between the years 1537 and 1540, stripped her of some very valuable acquisitions. In 1573, Cyprus also was torn from the grasp of the republic by the Ottoman power. In 1669, Candia followed. The war, which terminated in the surrender of that island to the Turks, was so bloody and destructive, that it became common in Venice

to express what we call "a war to the knife" by the terms "*Una Guerra di Candia.*" The Christian inhabitants forsook the island after its surrender, and were received into the Venetian territory of Istria, while the Candiot nobility were numbered among the citizens of Venice, and the members of thirty noble families of the republic, who had founded the Candian state on the model of their own, were welcomed back to the place in the great council which their fathers had occupied. Wars with the Porte recommenced at the close of the century, when Venice recovered some of the territories she had lost, including the Morea and parts of Dalmatia; but the tables were turned again in 1718, when the Turks, after reconquering the Morea, compelled the republic, by the treaty of Paparowitz, to renounce all claim to her old possessions in Greece for ever.

While this diminution of foreign empire was weakening the resources of the old queen of the Adriatic, her internal splendour and luxury exhibited no decline. The history of the seventeenth, as well as of the sixteenth century, furnish abundant illustrations of pride and display. The visit of Henry III., during the former period, in 1574, is an incident which the chroniclers record with profuse details of galleys and gondolas, robes of office, liveries and uniforms, grand processions and gorgeous canopies, masses and banquets, sham fights and regattas, with music, illuminations, and fireworks. The story of these gay doings is followed by a narrative of the plague in the year 1575, when,

amidst the utter terror of the people, the officers of the republic remained at their posts in the calm discharge of duty, though one who was addressing the senate in the morning might be a corpse at night, hurried away in the funeral gondola to his place of burial. Twenty years later, a great figure is made in the stories of Venetian state and ceremony by the dogeressa of Marino Grimani, just as twenty years earlier the dogeressa of Lorenzo Priuli shines with the lustre of extraordinary magnificence. The marriage of a doge, or the accession of a dogeressa, was always deemed an event for great rejoicing among the Venetians; and in the case of doge Marino's lady, we are told that she was conducted in gold brocade and wearing a crown, to the church of St. Mark, amidst music and the roar of artillery; that she sat enthroned in the midst of a haughty court of Venetian dames, in the presence-chamber of the ducal palace, and that a golden rose was sent her by the pope—a special proof of papal favour. It should be added, as a characteristic anecdote of the senate, that they would not allow her highness to wear this ornament from Rome, but deposited it in the treasury of St. Mark, because the gift was one confined to sovereign princes, and the seignory of Venice were cautious not to recognise the doge's wife as belonging to that class.

A vivid picture of Venice, especially of Venetian costumes, is supplied by worthy John Evelyn, who visited the city in 1645. He witnessed the ceremony of the marriage of the



Adriatic, and describes the Grand Canal as a sort of Hyde Park, covered with "water-coaches," as he quaintly calls the gondolas. "It was now Ascension week," he says, "and the great mart or fair of the whole year was kept, everybody at liberty and merry. The noblemen stalking with their ladies on chop-pines ; these are high-heeled shoes, particularly affected by these proud dames, or, as some say, invented to keep them at home, it being very difficult to walk with them. The truth is, their garb is very odd, as seeming always in masquerade ; their other habits also totally different from all nations. They wear very long crisped hair, of several shapes and colours, which they make so by a wash, dishevelling it on the brim of a broad hat that has no crown, but a hole to put out their heads by ; they dry them in the sun, as one may see them at their windows. In their tire they set silk flowers and sparkling stones, their petticoats coming from their very arm-pits, so that they are near three quarters and a half apron ; their sleeves are made exceedingly wide, under which their shift-sleeves as wide and commonly tucked up to the shoulder, showing their naked arms through false sleeves of tiffany, girt with a bracelet or two, with knots of points richly tagged about their shoulders, and other places of their body, which they usually cover with a kind of yellow veil of lawn very transparent. Thus attired, they set their hands on the heads of two matron-like servants or old women to support them, who are mumbling their beads.

It is ridiculous to see how these ladies crawl in and out of their gondolas by reason of their choppines, and what dwarfs they appear when taken down from their wooden scaffolds. Of these I saw thirty near together, stalking half as high again as the rest of the world, for the citizens may not wear choppines, but cover their bodies and faces with a veil of a certain glittering taffeta or lustre, the whole face being entirely hid with it, nor may the common women take this habit, but go abroad unveiled. To the corners of these virgin veils hang broad but flat tassels of curious Point de Venise. The married women go in veils. The nobility wear the same colour, but of fine cloth lined with taffeta in summer, with fur of the bellies of squirrels in the winter, which all put on at a certain day, girt with a girdle embossed with silver. The vest not much different from what our bachelors of art wear in Oxford, with a hood of cloth made like a sack cast over their left shoulder, and a round cloth black cap fringed with wool, which is not so comely. They also wear their collar open to show the diamond button of the stock of their shirt. I have never seen pearls for colour and bigness comparable to what the ladies wear, most of the noble families being very rich in jewels, especially pearls, which are always left to the son or brother who is destined to marry, which the eldest seldom do. The doge's vest is of crimson velvet, the procurator's, etc., of damask very stately. Nor was I less surprised with the strange variety of the several nations seen

every day in the streets and piazzas ; Jews, Turks, Armenians, Persians, Moors, Greeks, Sclavonians, some with their targets and bucklers, and all in their native fashions, negotiating in this famous emporium, which is always crowded with strangers."

While gay and giddy multitudes thronged the Piazza and glided down the canals, the despotic government of the republic had its eyes open, and its agents busy in all directions to watch for political offences, and to apprehend transgressors. Numerous were the imprisonments and executions which took place in Venice under the direction of its invisible tribunal, nor was it an uncommon thing for men to be publicly hanged on the Piazzetta, without any satisfactory information being given as to the offence for which they suffered. A remarkable instance of the infliction of judicial death upon a number of persons, without any clear statement of the crime for which they died, occurred in 1618. Sir Henry Wotton was in Venice at the time, and he remarks: "The whole town is at present in horror and confusion upon the discovery of a foul and fearful conspiracy of the French against the state, whereof no less than thirty have already suffered very condign punishment, between men strangled in prison, drowned in the silence of the night, and hanged in the public view; and *yet the bottom is invisible.*" Indeed, it was so invisible, that though three hundred perished under the hand of the executioner, no consistent account of any plot was ever given, no sufficient documentary

evidence of it has been found in the Venetian archives, and an intelligent writer who has acutely examined the subject declares, that he should suppose the whole story to have been fictitious—as it was suspected by some to be at the very time—were it not for the immeasurable weight of guilt which it would attach to the memory of the rulers of Venice. We also read that, in the year 1662, a senator, named Antonio Foscarini, who had been ambassador to France, was hanged by the leg between the columns of the Piazzetta, after being strangled in prison, simply on the information of two spies, who said they had seen him frequenting the palace of the Spanish minister by night. It was afterwards discovered that the Spanish secretary knew nothing of either the accuser or the accused, and that the whole was a device of the minions of the republic to secure from the Council of Ten favour and reward. This time, however, they overshot their mark, and were themselves executed for their foul conspiracy. The despotism of the Council of Ten was intolerable to every individual of political importance, yet its continuance was felt to be inseparable from the permanence of the republic. It therefore happened, in 1625, that an attempt made to remove or alter it only ended in the increase of its powers, the very man who was its chief supporter sacrificing his own personal inclinations to what he deemed needful for the stability of the state.

Amidst the luxury which was deemed by many as the sign, and amidst the despotism

which was equally deemed the secret of her prosperity, Venice was decidedly declining in power and resources. Her colonies were curtailed, and from other causes her commerce also diminished. The exchequer of the proud republic sank even as early as 1645 so very low, that the government, which had for ages so jealously guarded the rank of a noble, felt compelled by the Turkish war to sell to the wealthy plebeian citizens patents of nobility. "When Corregi," says Burnet, "said to the duke that he was afraid to ask that honour for want of merit, the duke asked him if he had a hundred thousand ducats, and when the other answered that sum was ready, the duke told him that was a great merit."\*

The long peace upon which Venice entered in the early part of the eighteenth century, because her means would not permit her to go to war, did not preserve the republic from decay; in spite of her long-cherished internal policy she continued gradually to decline, till the storm which swept over Europe at the close of that period smote her throne, and left her in the dust.

\* Burnet's Letters, p. 155.

## CHAPTER V.

## ITS FALL.

UP to the time of the fall of Venice, the territories of the republic, though much more limited than they had been in the day of its meridian prosperity, remained very considerable. On the *Terra Ferma*, the provinces of Bergamo, Brescia, Crema, Verona, Vicenza, Rovigo, and Treviso, were still under the standard of St. Mark. On the mainland, to the north and east, the authority of the state extended over Friuli and Istria, and parts of Dalmatia and Albania. And among the Ionian Isles, Corfu, Paxo, Sta. Maura, Ithaca, Zante, Asso, the Strophades, and Cerigo, continued beneath the sway of their old masters. The total population of the republic, in 1789, was 2,844,212.

The old form of the Venetian government was unchanged till it totally perished. There were many struggles between the nobility and the Council of Ten, but they always terminated in favour of the latter. Ancient prejudices, and a superstitious reverence for it, as the famed safeguard of the republic, were not the only bulwarks which supported it; the perma-

nence of its power was also owing to the favour of the commonalty, who, so long as they left politics alone, did not suffer from the despotism of the oligarchy, but saw in it what they regarded as a wholesome check upon the body of the nobility, whom they held in much abhorrence. To the last it was true of the inquisitorial power of the state, that it was strange and mysterious—

“ Moving throughout, subtle, invisible,  
And universal as the air they breathed :—  
                    A power that, if but named  
In casual converse, be it where it might,  
The speaker lowered at once his eyes, his voice,  
And pointed upwards, as to God in heaven.  
What though that power was there, he who lived thus,  
Pursuing pleasure, lived as if it were not ;—  
But let him in the midnight air indulge  
A word—a thought—against the laws of Venice,  
And in that hour he vanish'd from the earth.”

An example or two of this vigilance and terrible severity, relating to the eve of the fall of Venice, may here be appropriately introduced. A German merchant one night supped at an inn in Venice, in company with several persons. Soon afterwards an officer came to his lodgings, and required that he should seal up his trunk and follow him. The stranger's questions were met by signs of silence, and, muffled up in a cloak, he was hurried away through a number of streets to some underground gallery, where he was confined in a small cell. Next day he was placed in a room alone, hung with black, and lighted with one taper burning before a crucifix. After two days of anxious suspense, a curtain was withdrawn, and a voice from a person, invisible,

inquired his name, and birth, and business; and whether, at a certain time, in the society of certain persons, he had not heard an abbé use certain expressions? He gave the best answer he could. "Would you know the abbé again?" asked the voice. On an affirmative reply being given, another curtain was removed, and there was the priest hanging on a gibbet.

A senator was roused in the dead of night, and ordered to step into a gondola waiting for him. Being conducted to a lonely spot, he was there shown a dead body with a rope round its neck. Upon being asked if he recognised it, what was his horror on finding it was the corpse of an intimate friend and tutor to his children! The young man heard his patron speak of some political matters which he afterwards repeated; on this account he had been seized and strangled. The senator was rowed back to his palace after he had seen the dismal sight, to muse on the lesson which it read to him on the need of more caution in his intercourse with others.\*

A French nobleman was robbed in Venice, and happened to complain of the negligence of the police. When he was leaving the city, his gondola was stopped. He inquired the reason. The gondolier pointed to a red flag in the distance. The boat of an inquisitor was in pursuit. "Monsieur," said one of the persons on board this terrible bark, addressing himself to the French noble, "are you the prince of Craon?" "Yes," he replied. "Were you

\* Life of Howard, p. 350.



robbed last Friday?" "Yes." "Of how much?" "Of five hundred ducats." "Where were they?" "In a green purse." "And do you suspect any one of the robbery?" "A domestic of the hotel." "Would you know him?" "Without doubt." The speaker removed with his foot a cloak which covered a dead man. He held in his hand a green purse. "You see that justice is done," pursued the officer. "There's your money; take it and depart; but remember that you never again set your foot in a country where you have impeached the wisdom of the government."

These officers of the state inquisition had an influence upon the Venetians bordering on the supernatural; and at times of public festivity, when large assemblies were present in St. Mark's Place, the presence of four of these mysterious functionaries, with black staves of office, was quite sufficient to maintain order and control the movements of the multitude.

Like the other characteristics of the republic, splendour and luxury remained with it to the last. As Venice had been in former days, so it continued through the eighteenth century, the resort of foreigners, and those persons who, by the money they spent and the dissipation in which they indulged, contributed to prolong the reign of gaiety and pleasure in the marble city. Almost every day was a festival of some kind; the year was one long carnival; amusement came to be the business of the citizens,

\* Venise, par Jules le Comte, p. 170.

and the merchant princes were turned into the keepers of houses of gambling and licentiousness. Gaming was taken under the charge of the government; and one of the nobles, in his robes of office, presided at the tables where sat lines of masked gamblers engaged in deep play. Vices of every kind abounded, and were connived at by the government. Hardly ever was a city so abandoned: but the hour of punishment was at hand.

The revolutionary army of France entered Italy in 1795, and soon approached the Venetian frontiers. They were defenceless. Venice professed adherence still to her neutral policy. France on one side, Austria on the other, were at war. The Austrians entered the territory of the Venetians; a circumstance which cost Bonaparte a battle, and he declared that the republic had broken their neutrality (which ought to have been, he said, an armed one) by allowing this. He offered to take Venice into alliance with France, but the seignory justly feared such a coalition. Austria also sought to bind them to its interests, but to this they were averse. They expressed a wish to refrain from taking sides, but it was evidently from fear, not from principle or self-respect. Their courage was gone; and though they had still troops, provisions, and shipping, which might have sufficed to stand a siege, and to prolong their independence, they gave indubitable signs that they would fall an easy prey as soon as they were attacked. Bonaparte saw this, and early resolved to put a French bridle on the

horses of St. Mark. He was not a man to make much difficulty about a case for war; his wishes were quite enough as to that matter; but insurrections in Brescia and Bergamo led to disturbances in Verona, and furnished him with a ground of quarrel. There was a French garrison in the latter city; a desperate conflict ensued, and many of Bonaparte's soldiers lost their lives. As Verona was a Venetian dependency, this was enough. He vowed vengeance against Venice, and demanded that certain persons who had been imprisoned for their sympathy in the revolutionary opinions which prevailed in France should be immediately liberated. "If," said he, addressing the Venetian ambassadors, "all who have outraged France are not punished—if the prisoners are not released, the British minister dismissed, the population disarmed, and choice made at once between France and England, I hereby declare war against you. I have eighty thousand men and twenty gun-boats. There shall be no more inquisition, no more senate; and I will prove another Attila to Venice. I no longer offer you alliance, but dictation. I will disarm your rabble if your government has too little power for the purpose, and that government is so decrepit that it must now fall to pieces."

To make matters worse for Venice, just then a French vessel pushed its way into the harbour, defying all the port regulations, for which it was seized by a Venetian galliot, and several of the crew killed or wounded. The French

general immediately demanded that the three inquisitors of state should be delivered up into his hands as an expiation for the offence of shedding French blood. Then came a fierce manifesto of war. The old city was filled with terror; an extraordinary assembly was called. It was the 30th of April. Late that spring evening there came a message to the senate, as they sat in the ducal palace, informing them that the French were building batteries on the Lagune. Alarmed at the intelligence, they sought to open negotiations with the invading force. Envoys were sent and insulted. Six days' armistice was granted. There were more anxious sittings of the assembly, while crowds trembled in suspense round St. Mark's Piazza. At last it was determined to surrender to Bonaparte at discretion; so, without any resistance, the proud lords of a republic which had seen more than a thousand years, allowed the foot of the invader to trample on and destroy it for ever.

All was confusion. The French landed, and scenes of mad revelry ensued. Trees of liberty were planted; the golden book was burned; the old legend was obliterated from the volume in the lion's hand, where the revolutionary conquerors wrote instead, "The rights of man and of citizenship." The boatman, sculling his gondola along, thought of it, and laughing, said, "The lion for the first time has turned over a new leaf."

The arsenal was stripped, the old Bucentaur broken up, the ducal paintings, statues, and

manuscripts seized, and the brazen horses shipped for Paris. The Venetian territory, now at the victor's disposal, he made use of as a means to procure peace with Austria. The bribe was accepted, and the great maritime city, so long a queen, with its dependencies as far as the Adige, was handed over as a slave into the hands of the emperor, Bonaparte at the time telling the Directory at Paris, that the Venetian people were not made for liberty. Bergamo and Brescia were reserved for the new Cisalpine republic, and the Ionian Isles were claimed by France. Manin, the last doge, fell down in a fit as he was swearing allegiance to his new master, and died soon after; and so ended the long line of rulers who had worn the ducal cap of Venice.

It is remarkable that the constitution of Venice, which it was once the fashion of politicians loudly to extol, has in modern times become an object of reproach and aversion. Views accordant with justice have happily taken the place of notions framed on principles of hollow expediency, and there are few now who will not concur in the following remarks of an author of large intelligence, sound judgment, and calm feeling: "In the Place of St. Mark," says Mr. Hallam, "among the monuments of extinguished greatness, a traveller may regret to think that an insolent German soldiery has replaced even the senators of Venice. Her ancient liberty, her bright and romantic career of glory in countries so dear to the imagination, her magnanimous defence in the war of Chiozza,

a few thinly scattered names of illustrious men, will rise upon his mind, and mingle with his indignation at the treachery which robbed her of her independence. But if he has learned the true attributes of wisdom in civil policy, he will not easily prostitute that word to a constitution formed without reference to property or population, that vested sovereign power in a body of impoverished nobles, partly in an overruling despotism; or to a practical system of government that made vice the ally of tyranny, and sought impunity for its own assassinations by encouraging dissoluteness in private life." The fact is, that the constitution of Venice was an enormous system of unrighteousness, defying the "rights of men and the laws of God," and in its fall we cannot help recognising the operation of retributive justice. The tyranny of the government and the vices of the people, the latter caressed by the former with a view to the impunity of its own proceedings, might well together bring down on the republic at last the judgments of God. Secular historians are taken up with tracing the human antecedents to great national catastrophes, but the study of the Scriptures teaches us to discover causes of a higher class at work in connexion with the doings of the children of men. We see God's unchangeable moral laws producing their appropriate results under the administration of his own all-comprehending providence, that "*though hand join in hand*" to do evil, "*the wicked shall not be unpunished.*" We are led to regard the destruction of Tyre, as recorded in the Bible, not

as a solitary and unique case, but as a representative instance, showing how all states, which like that ancient one are full of pride, and luxury, and vice, lifting up their hearts against God, shall at last be covered with humiliation and shame. A lesson of everlasting interest, and one to be pondered by all people, is contained in those fearful words of the Divine oracle, which are so forcibly recalled to our minds as we contemplate the fall of Venice: "By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffic; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more" Ezek. xxviii. 16—19.

## PART II.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE CITY.

## CHAPTER I.

## THE GRAND CANAL.

A RAILWAY on the sea is a strange sight, but it is only in keeping with other things at Venice, where the whole scene strikes one as indescribably strange. You approach the city from the Italian mainland by a viaduct nearly two miles and a half in length, crossing the Lagune, which, though in some parts very shallow, looks like an arm of the ocean. The water spreading far away on both sides of the traveller in the railway carriage; the long line of embankments and arches over which the train sweeps like a sea-bird; the sky painted with glowing colours by the setting sun; the growing shades of evening over the eastern portion of the prospect, where are dimly seen numerous scattered lights, indicating that there is Venice, are objects which indelibly impress themselves on the memory of any one who has ever seen them. Arrived at the terminus—the baggage examined, the passport taken, and a permission given to proceed—the sense of novelty is increased by finding, instead of carriages and



cabs, and omnibuses on wheels, a whole fleet of long narrow boats, and others of larger dimensions, which are really omnibuses on the water, with crowds of boisterous attendants offering their services and imploring your custom. Most English persons, we suppose, prefer to take one of these long narrow boats for the sake of the privacy of the conveyance, and rather than enter the romantic city in so unromantic a vehicle as an omnibus, though it be plied with oars. The long narrow boat referred to bears the name of a gondola—so familiar to every ear, and so suggestive of picturesque forms and poetical associations. It is hardly so picturesque and poetical when seen as when imagined. Its slender shape resembles that of a canoe, with both ends sharply pointed, the stem gently curving and projecting far above the level of the water, the head less prominent, but tapering up into a point surmounted by a piece of bright iron, placed erect, and cut into a form like a row of teeth with a cock's comb on the top. The front part of the vessel is covered over with boards, serving underneath for a locker, and in the middle there is placed a small and inconvenient cabin, where people have to double themselves up in order to sit down. Not unfrequently, however, this cabin is removed, and instead of it, the boat is overspread with a canvass awning, which is a great improvement. Behind is a sort of miniature quarter-deck, where the gondolier stands with his face to the prow, impelling and guiding with graceful motion this singular sort

of boat, by means of an oar or scull which works in an iron stand fastened to the side. In ancient times these barges were richly painted and gilded, but now they present a very sombre appearance, a sumptuary law in the fifteenth century having prescribed that with a few exceptions they should be painted black. The gondola is so early and conspicuous an object of interest to a person visiting Venice, and is a feature so constantly recurring in all the water scenes of this city of canals, that we have thought it proper to be thus particular in our description of it at the very commencement. Embarked within it, even though the inconvenience of the stinted cabin be increased by a pile of travelling bags and boxes, all is forgotten amidst the thoughts and feelings which come crowding over the mind, producing the effect of a dream, as the boat glides down the Grand Canal, the broad pavement of water bordered on both sides by tall buildings, from whose windows at night come gleams that dance and sparkle on the tranquil scene below; while overhead the old stars are quietly shining, just as they did that night when Contarini embarked in his galley to defend the republic after the fall of Chiozza. The quiet of the scene is wonderful: no rumbling of coach-wheels, no cracking of whips, no sound but the cry of the gondolier, as he turns a corner to warn some brother boatman of his approach, or the cadence of a song, perchance, now only seldom heard, like the echo of one of the old serenades that used to be sung under the marble balcony of

some senator's palace. Onward the traveller glides till he reaches the entrance of his hotel, the Albergo di Europa, for example, once the palace of the noble family of the Giustiniani, up whose marble steps from the water's edge he immediately ascends as he quits his gondola.

The Grand Canal, in the shape of the letter S, cuts the city in two, and is the main thoroughfare for traffic and pleasure. Out of it run a number of smaller canals, or *rii*, as they are called, intersecting Venice in all directions, and separating from each other the little islands, to the number of seventy-two, upon which the houses are built. The Grand Canal at the eastern end begins near the Piazzetta, a common place for embarkation and landing, where gondolas lie together in crowds, and the gondoliers are eagerly on the look out for fares. Here may be seen idlers of various descriptions, some lounging or reclining on the pavement of the molo, or quay, others shading themselves under the arcades of the ducal palace, or of the cafés and shops on the opposite side. The Venetians have abandoned their characteristic dresses, the man his red tabarro, the woman her black zendale; yet the scarlet cap retained by the one, and the gay shawl thrown over the head of the other, give them a picturesque aspect; while the showy costumes of Greek sailors and Armenian merchants impart brilliancy and liveliness to the scene. These latter dresses, also, together with the presence of a number of small craft and larger vessels, moored by the quay, of Turkish build, and overspread with their striped

awnings, give a very oriental look to the whole picture. Though the signs of trade are very feeble now compared with what they were in the days of the Crusades and in the fifteenth century, yet there is considerable activity in the mercantile shipping, which numbered in 1817 not more than 300 merchant vessels; in 1837, however, they amounted to 3,000.

Entering the Grand Canal in a gondola, you pass the gardens of the Austrian governor's palace on the right hand, which, though not remarkable in themselves, strike attention from the rarity of shrubs, and still more of trees, in Venice; and on the left hand, the Dogana del Mare, or custom-house, where, though Venice is a free port, a few small duties are levied on merchandise to defray certain municipal expenses. The building, though of some architectural pretension, and surmounted by a huge globe, supported by two kneeling figures, with a third erect on the top, is completely eclipsed and thrown into the shade by the imposing church of Santa Maria della Salute, just beyond it, with its lofty porch crowned with statues and its gigantic cupolas. Advancing up the canal, the eye curiously scans the buildings on each side, so very unlike any with which the inhabitants of the north and west of Europe are familiar. For the most part they rise abruptly out of the water, with a flight of steps at the grand entrance, close to which are tall posts, painted with various colours in stripes, and used as mooring points for the gondolas. Persons of consequence in Venice keep gondolas,

as the rich in England keep carriages, and two or three of them may be seen fastened to these wooden piers at the doorway of an old palace. Here and there a short extent of parapet or pathway runs in front of a building, and, in a few cases, open spaces occur, covered with pavement, in front of a church or some other public edifice. Anything like a detailed description of the palaces would be enough to fill a volume like this. We can but give the reader a general view, adding a few particular specimens. These old mansions of the Venetian nobility are of different ages and styles of architecture. Some have a strong Byzantine impress—others a Moorish look—others, again, are decidedly Italian. A few are of the fifteenth century. Most belong to the two following centuries. They are very lofty, some six stories high. The windows, and balconies attached to them, are the most ornamental parts; at the angles may be seen little lions and dogs in marble, and between them vases of flowers, in which the Venetian women delight greatly. The doorways are frequently very plain. The marble of which these edifices are constructed exhibits few of the stains and marks of age, owing to the nature of the climate; but the general appearance of these famous structures indicates that they have passed into hands very different from those of their former owners. Faded grandeur, neglect, almost decay, are plainly indicated. They look like men in threadbare habiliments, yet retaining the style and fashion of better days. The palace bearing

the name of Faliero, but not the residence of the doge of that name who was beheaded, is an ancient edifice, not badly described by Le Comte as a sort of rustic construction, half Swiss cottage and half Turkish pavilion.\* The palace of the Giustiniani is in the Moorish style; that called Moro-Lin, on the opposite side of the canal, has a façade exhibiting the four orders, Rustic, Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian. The Foscari palace is one of the most magnificently built and worst situated in Venice. Its date is the end of the fourteenth century, and it is formed of a triple gallery, with balconies covered by acute arches, producing an effect decidedly Saracenic. It tells of the unfortunate doge whose name it bears—there is the chamber in which he died: but the massive stuffs which now decorate it are in strong contrast with the style of the beautiful exterior. It was once full of splendour, for the family was one of the most illustrious in Venice, furnishing Sicily with kings and other states with princes, besides the republic with a doge.† It has been used as the palace for lodging sovereigns, on their visit to Venice. Here Henry III. of France passed seven months; Casimir of Poland, and the kings of Bohemia and Hungary, have also here received sumptuous hospitality. But the apartments, once so richly adorned and so gaily enlivened, are now neglected, empty, and in ruins. “Who occupy this apartment?” it was asked by a stranger looking over the palace, as he entered

\* “Une construction campagnarde, moitié châlet, moitié kiosque.”

† Le Comte calls them, “Les Stuarts de l’histoire Venitienne.”

a room miserably furnished with the tattered, broken, and decayed remains of ancient magnificence. "Ah!" said the guide, "they are two old ladies, very infirm—they are countesses—they are the last of the Foscari." It is very affecting to think of these last representatives of a noble name lingering in poverty amidst the scene of ancestral splendour. It awakens salutary reflections on the changes of this world, on the humiliation in which glory often ends, on the vanity of earthly things from first to last. The palace of the Contarini, which furnished Venice with no less than eight doges, and of which the cardinal of that name already mentioned was a member, is situated at a point where the Grand Canal makes a strong bend, and is of the Lombardic style, ornamented with sculptures of the period of the *Renaissance*. This family once had four palaces on the Grand Canal, and a fifth at the extremity of Venice. The last is still remarkable for its interior. The Mocenigo family had three palaces contiguous to one another. In two of these the poet Byron resided—first in the centre one, then in that nearest to the Rialto. There he wrote several of his poems, and, it is painful to add, lived in the indulgence of the most vicious propensities. These are only a few of the palaces that are worthy of being particularized, some of which in the interior present valuable collections of pictures, statues, and antiquities.

Every now and then, as the traveller glides down the Grand Canal, he passes the opening of a smaller water street, which runs into the

heart of the city, crossed by bridges. Right and left they open interesting perspectives, crossed by bridges, and revealing the caprices of all kinds of architecture. In one of these canals, beyond the Rialto, and of wider dimensions than most, there stands the celebrated palace of the Manfrini, a building of modern style, well preserved, affording a specimen of the grandeur in which the Venetian nobility lived in the later days of the republic. The interior, consisting of halls, staircases, saloons, and other apartments, resembles a nobleman's house in our own country. From some of the windows is seen the garden of the mansion—a rare thing in Venice—with small angular beds full of flowers. Secret doors here and there remind one of the mysterious doings in such places in former days; and some of the locks of the doors and engraved silver plates are good specimens of Italian art in a former age. There is some old furniture, a good library, and a curious collection of petrified fishes and shells; but the chief objects of interest are the pictures. There are ten rooms full of them. We cannot attempt to criticise or even enumerate these productions, but we may be allowed to mention a Madonna, by Carlo Dolci; a picture, by Perugino, of Christ washing the disciples' feet, in which the heads are executed in the most exquisite manner; a fine Madonna, by Guido, and Lucretia, by the same artist; Bacchus and Ariadne, by Caracci; Titian's mother, by her son, wonderfully natural, but with a vulgar face, much like that



of a fishwoman ; and a famous painting of Ariosto, by the same skilful hand—"The poetry of portrait," as Byron says, and "the portrait of poetry." We saw the justness of his remark, that there is an extreme resemblance of style in the female faces of so many centuries to those you see daily among the existing Italians. "The queen of Cyprus and Giorgione's wife," (or rather the daughter of Palma Becchio,) he adds, "particularly the latter, are Venetians as it were of yesterday—the same eyes and expression."

There are other noble palaces not on the Grand Canal, amongst which that of Trevisano is particularly noticeable, being richly incrustated with marble, and showing the transition from the Gothic to the Italian style of building. This palace is connected with one of the most extraordinary episodes in Venetian biography—the elopement, in the sixteenth century, of the infamous Bianca Capello, whose father had become the possessor of the house. It was hence that she fled in a gondola with her lover, a banker's clerk, and having reached the mainland proceeded to Florence. Denounced and repudiated by her enraged father, she sought reconciliation in vain through Francesco, the son of Cosmo de' Medici. She soon became the mistress of this man, who was virtually ruler of Florence, and after a series of murders, which we will not stain these pages by relating, he took her as his wife, and thereby made her the duchess of Florence, he having succeeded to the grand dukedom. An embassy was now dis-

patched to Venice, and the wretched Bianca, on account of the rank she had attained, was actually acknowledged daughter of the republic, and treated accordingly with the highest honour. Her father received her once more to his favour, as though he considered her later crimes had effaced her former dishonour. About eight years after this, both the grand duke and Bianca expired within a few hours of each other, having been poisoned, it is supposed, by cardinal de' Medici, Francesco's brother. The whole story is illustrative of the manners of the age, the utter want of principle or pure feeling on the part of Venice, and the tremendous lengths of iniquity to which licentious passions will goad on their victims.

There are no less than three hundred and six public bridges in Venice. As you glide through the minor canals, which these bridges cross, they form, in most instances, objects of interest, from their picturesque appearance. As you walk over them and pause to look down the canals, the perspective of the views they command is often exceedingly good, such as to delight the artist, and tempt him to make use of his sketch-book. But on the Grand Canal there is only one bridge. Another was projected by the Austrian government, to commemorate the coronation of the emperor as king of Lombardy. It was to have been built on that part of the canal which faces the Academy of Fine Arts. The traffic across the water at this point, its contiguity to the barracks, and the constant wants of the inhabitants in the neighbourhood,

rendered the accomplishment of the design extremely desirable ; while the building, if well constructed, would have been an ornament to the canal ; but the large sum requisite for the execution of the plan caused its abandonment.

The Rialto, as the single bridge over the Grand Canal is called, derives its name from that of the isle which it connects with the opposite isle of St. Mark. The original bridge was of wood, built in 1264. Several structures of that kind seem to have succeeded each other, destructive fires being mentioned from time to time as destroying them. The last of this description is said to have been so confined that there was scarcely any hour of the day when it could be crossed with convenience. The present celebrated structure was begun in 1589, and completed within two years, all the stonemasons in Venice being employed on the works. It was designed by Antonio da Ponte, and cost two hundred and fifty thousand sequins. Sansovino reports that twelve thousand piles of elm timber, each six feet long, were used to form the first foundation. The bridge itself is entirely of marble, having one noble and graceful arch, the form of which shows how well the rules of art were understood by the ancient Venetians. While the general appearance of the edifice is bold and majestic, exception has fairly been taken to the detail of the sculptures which ornament it. Their merit is inferior, and it is said that it was originally intended that there should have been upon the building much more of sculpture than there is

at present. It is related by Le Comte that many at the time were so incredulous about the possibility of accomplishing Antonio's design for the Rialto, that they applied to it a proverb equivalent to the French one, "*Quand les poules auront des dents*"—When hens have teeth. The work was deemed at the time too bold to be practicable. When the bridge was finished, the proverb was inscribed on one corner by the workmen, who had won a victory over their incredulous contemporaries. The arch is ninety-four feet and a half in the span, and in height from the water twenty-one; the width is seventy-five feet, and it is divided longitudinally by two lines of shops into three parallel streets, each being in fact a series of steps. The middle street is the principal, and is a sort of bazaar for idlers and strangers. Here are found, in particular, those goldsmiths who sell the little Venetian chains of which the strength seems incompatible with the delicacy of the texture.

Leaning over the battlements of this bridge, and looking down upon the canal, the stranger in Venice is struck with the *tout ensemble* of the scene. The buildings of various architecture on both sides, the winding course of the stream making them meet as it were in the distance—windows, balconies, steps, and mooring piers diversifying the surfaces of the building on either hand—gondolas and other craft shooting to and fro with astonishing rapidity, but though numerous, and crossing one another's path, and sometimes seeming to threaten a

collision, yet never touching each other—the graceful motion of the gondolier as he skilfully guides his vessel, and the diversified colours which dapple the picture, supplied by the costume of the boatmen and passengers, and often by a freight consisting of vegetables, especially heaps of yellow melons, like huge balls of gold, intermixed with bright green leaves—all these objects form themselves into a picture scarcely to be seen elsewhere, and once seen not to be soon forgotten by one who has an artist's eye.

Some of the buildings contiguous to the Rialto require a brief notice. On the right hand is the Fondaco de' Tedeschi. Formerly there were several factories or marts in Venice belonging to particular nations, just as there are now factories or marts pertaining to European settlers in China. Nations lived together under a domestic jurisdiction, and transacted business under the guarantee of mutual help and protection. The Fondaco de' Tedeschi was one of the edifices used for such a purpose. It was built at the beginning of the sixteenth century, and now, like the remains of some similar structures, is devoted to purposes connected with the government of the city. The Fondaco de' Tedeschi is at present the Dogana, or Custom House. Its walls were once covered with frescos by Giorgione and Titian. On the left hand of the bridge, being, as already mentioned, the original island of the Rialto, one looks upon a scene which is full of storied recollections of the past. There is old Venice. "Even till the sixteenth century, and

perhaps later, Rivo Alto was considered as the city in all legal documents, and distinguished as such from the *state* of Venice, and of all the eyots and islands upon which the city now stands, it is the most of a continent. After the population was extended into the other quarters, the Rialto continued to be the seat of all the establishments connected with trade and commerce. The Fabbriche, a series of buildings covering perhaps as much as a fifth of the island, and partly connected by arcades, were employed as warehouses and custom-houses, the exchange being held in the piazza opposite the church of San Jacopo, (the first church built in Venice,) an irregular, and now a neglected quadrangle. The whole place was the resort of the mercantile community; but if you seek to realize the locality of Shylock and Antonio, you must station yourself in the double portico at the end of the piazza opposite the church, that being the spot where the 'Banco Giro' was held, and where the merchants transacted the business of most weight and consequence. Sabellico tells us that this 'nobilissima piazza' was crowded from morning to night."\*

Leaving the Rialto, we may observe in connexion with the application of old edifices to modern purposes, that some of the palaces once occupied by noble merchants are now the abodes and offices of foreign consuls. The palace of the Cavalli, now occupied by the French consul, and that of the Cozzi, now in

\* Murray's Guide Book, p. 34.

the possession of the Spanish, are both handsome buildings—the same thing cannot be said of the house used for the English consulate. It may be added that the residences of both the French and Spanish representatives have the right of asylum for civil offenders, but not for state criminals. Two palaces are turned into hotels. The Moorish-looking palace of Nani Mocenigo is now the Albergo Reale, where the visitor may enjoy patrician splendour. The palace of the Giustiniani, an edifice of similar architecture of the sixteenth century, is now the Albergo dell' Europa, the most frequented hotel in Venice.

The Grand Canal is to the fashionable Venetians what the Champs Elysées are to the French, or Hyde Park to the English. Gondolas are their equipages. Gondoliers are their coachmen and footmen. Ornament being denied the vehicle, all that can mark attendance on the rich, in the way of grandeur, is confined to liveries. The *beau monde* of Venice, as of other cities, vie with each other in fashionable dress, making the canal instead of the drive the scene of their display. During the summer months there is a lack of brilliancy on the canal, but during the season, at the end of winter and in the spring, the surface of the water is enlivened with the gayest traffic. An aquatic entertainment of a very imposing character then takes place, giving the spectator an idea of what the canal must have been in the palmy days of Venetian prosperity and glory. It is difficult to distinguish the par-

ticulars of the multiform and many-coloured scene. The plumes, the ribbons, the scarfs, the new dresses of the ladies who occupy the gondolas, become confounded with the costume of the gondoliers, who have their scarfs, ribbons, and plumes. In the midst of this confusion you may distinguish other barques more grand, adorned like aquatic temples, junks, and yachts occupied for the most part by the authorities. The boats of certain corporations and societies, particularly those of Chiozza, attract attention by their proportions and elegance. Generally they are decorated in an antique style. This one circumstance, however, diminishes the effect, that while the palaces are the same, and the draperies which decorate them are almost the same as those which were used in remote times, certain details of costume are very different. The most imposing part of the spectacle after all is that afforded by the spectators themselves. The open windows of the palaces are full of eager countenances, and the tops of the houses are occupied by groups of people gazing on the sight. The arch of Gothic ogive or of Moorish trefoil which once enframed the families of the procurators and senators of the republic, now embrace parties of modern Venetians, many of them perhaps their descendants. The large crimson carpets, the lamps with flowers of gold and silk which hang from every window and balcony, give the whole scene a mediæval aspect, which contributes powerfully to sustain the illusion. Nothing in Paris, London, Madrid, or St. Petersburg, can



approach the originality of this aquatic entertainment. There is another kind of spectacle of which the canal is the scene, and which is called *Fresco*. It is a sort of nautical *corso*. Two large barques carrying musicians start from the garden of the government house by the Piazzetta, and proceed slowly along the whole extent of the canal in order that they may return when it is dark. An immense number of boats attend these musical bands. Gondolas are filled with young men and women, and the rowers often dress in gay costumes. The balconies are filled with spectators of the harmonious flotilla, which leads after it a long train. When it is dark, they light up coloured lanterns in a number of the boats, and send up rockets and Bengal lights, which, in their blue and red explosions, seem to cast upon the palaces a pale reflection like the moon, or to set fire to the projecting points illumined by their brilliant sparks.

A taste for gaiety rather than earnestness in the serious occupations of life, seems to be characteristic of Venice in the present century, as it was of Venice in the last. This feature of Venetian life has survived the fall of Venetian grandeur. The people cling to the amusements now that they have lost the possessions and the resources of the republic. Amidst scenes of decay, and while the shadows of past times seem to fall reproachfully on them, they still with a light heart indulge in the festivities which, as faded flowers, have come down to them. An existence devoted to pleasure, as

is that of many Venetians, and of many others who dwell among them and adopt their manners, must on reflection appear very unworthy of such a creature as man—very different from what we learn on the highest authority he is meant to be. An ephemeral career of idle enjoyment may suit a butterfly, but it is perfectly incongruous with the nature and destiny of man or woman. We are formed for serious occupation, from which we are to turn only at intervals for relaxation and refreshment. Even amusement, which should ever be kept within the bounds of innocence and moderation, is to be regarded by us only as the means of preparing for more strenuous efforts in life's serious tasks. The unbending of the bow is to be for the purpose of giving it greater vigour when it is drawn again. But especially the highest aids of life should be devoutly considered, even the service of Him who made us; and our preparation, in a manner according with his will, for the future and everlasting state of existence, to which all, even the gayest and most inconsiderate, as well as ourselves, are hastening onward with inconceivable rapidity.

## CHAPTER II.

## ST. MARK'S PLACE AND THE DUCAL PALACE.

MUCH of the impression which any particular place makes upon the mind of a traveller depends upon his first view of it. The circumstances under which we caught our earliest glimpse of St. Mark's Piazza were remarkably favourable. It was a summer's evening; the sun had gone down more than two hours, much of the sultry heat of the day still remained, the air was like that of the tropics, the sky was blue and bright with stars; the people of Venice had for the most part retired to their homes, the stillness of the city was unbroken by any sounds, even the hum of conversation. It was like the silence of a forest on a breathless night. We issued from a narrow street on the west side of the square, and at once the whole scene on which our imagination had often dwelt was disclosed in all its dream-like beauty. There was just that ideal aspect about it which belongs to a picture, especially a picture by some old Italian master. On either side there ran the long line of rich arcades, lighted up with lamps, which threw their reflection on the

marble pavement of the quadrangle, polished by the footsteps of many generations. The rays seemed to sparkle and quiver on the smooth surface of the ground as if it had been liquid. The details of the architecture were lost in the shadows left by the partial illumination of the place. It looked massive, picturesque, beautiful. One thought of oriental palaces ; they seemed realized here. The tops of the buildings, faintly lighted up from below, stood out distinctly against the clear Italian sky. And then, looking forward, the eye fell on St. Mark's Church, that edifice which appears so strange in all paintings and engravings of it, reminding one of oriental temples and Turkish mosques. Still more strange it was in reality ; its coloured and gilded mosaics in front dimly shining out like quaint old tapestries hung up over the doorways. The round yellowish gables, and the soft grey cupolas, swelled in their perfectly clear outline upon the background of the almost midnight heavens. Arches upon arches, pillars within pillars, sculptures upon sculptures, piles of precious things from far-off lands, the spoils of Venetian war, the symbols of Venetian pride, with the four bronze horses just distinguishable above the central entrance. There they were, tempting curiosity, exciting imagination, and stimulating one's faculty for waking dreams. In front, between us and St. Mark's, rose the three lofty red standards, in their huge bronze sockets, from which once floated the flag of the republic. On the right hand stood the lofty Campanile, and on the left the tower of

the clock ; the arcades on the three sides, and the church on the fourth, enclosing the space within, so empty and so quiet. Only here and there a red-capped sailor, or a man in Austrian uniform, or an Italian woman, or some other figure more shade-like than substantial, appeared to animate the scene. The mind fell back of course at once upon the history of Venice. Here was the very spot on and around which its romantic associations clustered. They came before us, floated in confusion through our memory, and left a vague impression of solemnity and awe. The shadows of the past, for ourselves we must confess, always produce seriousness of mind. We never can think of bygone eras without thinking of the relation of time to the infinite future—never can muse on the men of former ages without thinking of their spirits—where now existing, how now employed ! St. Mark's Place at Venice, of all places in the world, is, especially at night, the one to give intensity to such thoughts and feelings.

The sunshine of the next morning changed the picture somewhat, gave it distinctness, brought out all its details, threw a minute elaboration of ornament over it, and opened to view a number of objects within its compass not before discerned without destroying the first ideal impression.

In describing St. Mark's Place, we shall begin by stating the dimensions. The length is 576 feet, the greatest width 269, the least 185. The broadest end is at St. Mark's Church.

Then the quadrangle narrows gradually towards its west side. Let us walk round, beginning at the north-east corner. The east side, it will be remembered, is formed by the cathedral; between that and the north side is an open space. The point where we shall begin our stroll is the Tower of the Clock, or the *Torre dell' Orologio*. It is the work of Peter Lombard, and bears date 1494. The tower is not in itself remarkable, but the dial of the time-piece, with its connected machinery and ornaments, makes it so. The azure colour, intermixed with gold, has a brilliant effect, and draws the eye to it even at a great distance. The zodiacal signs mark the time of twenty-four hours. Over the dial plate are two Moorish figures which beat a bell at the conclusion of each of those periods. A figure of the Virgin, of gilded bronze, and a huge lion, with the Gospel of St. Mark in his paw, adorn the upper stories. The clock is furnished with some ingenious but grotesque contrivances, of a description which may be found in still greater perfection at Strasburgh. Only on particular occasions is the mechanism displayed at Venice. When certain religious festivals come round, at a particular hour a door flies open, and the three kings, smartly attired, come out to pay their respects to the image of the Virgin, before which they pause and bow, and then move on to disappear within another door on the opposite side.

Under the tower of the *Orologio* is an opening into the *Merceria*, a narrow kind of

alley, leading to the Rialto, and crowded with shops on both sides, which are among the best supplied and the most frequented in Venice. Indeed, there are few of a superior kind to be found elsewhere, except in St. Mark's Place, consequently the crowd of people daily met with here is very great. Running from the tower, and forming almost the entire north side of the Piazza, is a long range of buildings, called the Procuratie Vecchie. It consists of an arcade, with fifty arches, and two stories above, raised by Bartolomeo Buono di Bergamo, in the year 1500. It derives its name from the procurators of St. Mark, for whose use it was built, and who were among the most important functionaries of the ancient republic. They were the churchwardens or trustees of the church, and at one time amounted to the number of about thirty-four. While they were officially the guardians of the orphan, their popularity led many persons to name them as executors of their wills. Commonly, the doge was selected from these officers of trust and responsibility; and when appointments of state came to be articles of sale, as was the case in the latter days of the republic, these fetched a very high premium; the old nobility were favoured by having them at the price of 30,000 ducats, the new nobility could not obtain them for less than 100,000. The buildings, which retain the name derived from these procurators, are now private property, and are amongst the most valuable in the city, owing to their situation, as well as internal commodiousness

Some of the aristocracy of Venice have apartments there, and under the arcades are found shops and cafés, the front of which are crowded with chairs and tables, which, especially towards evening, are occupied by multitudes who come to sip coffee and eat ices. The side of the Piazza facing St. Mark is a line of modern building, erected by the French, somewhat in the style of the Palais Royal at Paris, but yet having some sort of keeping with the edifices on the south side. It was intended as a continuation of the royal palace into which those edifices were transformed. They are termed the Procuratie Nuove, having been erected originally for the increased number of the procurators, the old building not being considered spacious or magnificent enough. The Procuratie Nuove, then, form the south side, as the Procuratie Vecchie do the north, while the end is composed of the French façade uniting the two. Upon the site of these end buildings there stood, until it was demolished in order to make way for their erection, the church of San Geminiano. That structure, built by Sansovino, covering his remains, and said to have been one of his best works, stood on the spot now occupied by the vestibule and staircase of the royal palace. The present dimensions of the Piazza are larger than they were originally, and there remains a red marble mark in the pavement, showing the old boundary. Originally there was a canal there, and a church on its banks, dedicated to St. Geminiano, which was transferred to the position just indicated, where it remained



till it was pulled down by the French, at the commencement of the present century, for the erection of the royal palace already noticed.

We have thus hastily taken the circuit of the Piazza, and may observe, that on the west and south sides, as well as the north, the lower part of the buildings under the arcades is appropriated to shops or cafés. The latter are particularly celebrated. Towards sunset the area of St. Mark's Place is overspread with tables and chairs, where ladies and gentlemen are seated at their ease, as if in a drawing-room, taking refreshments. A space in the middle is left for promenaders, and when the Austrian band is playing, which it does two or three times a week, the concourse is immense. The scene then becomes very lively, and partakes of the modern gaiety of Paris and other European capitals. The sight of it enables the visitor to understand the saying of Bonaparte, "The Place of St. Mark is a saloon of which the sky is worthy to serve for a ceiling." For our part, we prefer the solitude of the Piazza, the first hour we gazed on it.

Near the east end of the Procuratie Nuove, just by the point where it makes an angle with the Piazzetta, which we shall presently describe, there stands the Campanile of St. Mark. It is, in fact, the belfry of the cathedral, although it stands some considerable distance in front of it. The separation of the belfry from the church is very common in Italy, and there are a few instances of it in our own country. Salisbury, Ledbury, and Chichester, are examples. The

Campanile of St. Mark was commenced in the year 902, but was not completed till 1155. At the base there is a remarkable construction by Sansovino, of the date of 1540, called the Loggia. It contained the apartments for the procurators when on duty as commanders of the guard, during the sitting of the grand councils. The building is of the composite order, the columns of rich marble, the bas-reliefs numerous, but of varied merit. The exterior of the shaft of the Campanile is marked by three long ribs of marble from top to bottom. On the top is a large open belfry, to which you ascend in the inside by means of a series of inclined planes. The sides of the belfry are formed by sixteen arches, four facing each quarter of the heavens. A gallery with a parapet runs round the outside. What a view is commanded here ! Southward lies the noble Adriatic, with the Pyrenees to the right. Northward the Tyrolese Alps. Immediately spreading round this singular post of observation lies the city of Venice, map-like, with its canals and neighbouring isles ; and just under the eye, to the east, is St. Mark's Church, considerably below, with its five domes, its four horses, and its numerous pinnacles. The effect produced on a summer's evening, as the sun is going down in his glory over the mainland beyond the lagoons, lighting them up with his parting rays, while the murmurs of the people in St. Mark's Place ascend like the hum of bees around the hive-door, it is impossible to describe. Then, as night comes on, as the stars

break out, one thinks of Galileo, who used here to gaze on the same stars, and study their mysterious motions, spelling out those laws of celestial mechanics, which, now universally believed, it was then heretical to unfold and assert. What changes have the last three hundred years produced in men's habits of thought respecting both heaven and earth !

Close by the Campanile, just in front of the church, stand the three tall red standards, on which the Austrian flag now floats in the place of the old banner of the republic. The foot or socket of each is large and massive, made of bronze, and looking like a candlestick by some popish altar, holding up an enormous red wax light. Hereabouts it is, all round the Campanile and the flag-staffs, that a large flock of pigeons may be constantly seen hovering or in repose—these birds having been from time immemorial kept at the cost of the republic, inspiring in the minds of the Venetians a superstitious regard which borders on reverence.

Having traversed the Piazza, we find ourselves in the Piazzetta, or little Piazza, running down from the east end of the great one by St. Mark's Church to the water-side, where the eye ranges over the lagoons and isles. The next side of this open space contains a continuation of the walk under arcades which surround St. Mark's Place. Here, too, are shops and cafés. The upper part exhibits a specimen of the Italian style, designed by Sansovino. The whole belongs to the royal palace, which, as before mentioned,

extends along the south and west sides of the Piazza. It is called the *Biblioteca Antica*, from its having been built for the reception of the library which Petrarch bequeathed to the republic, on the condition that an appropriate edifice should be provided to preserve them, together with many other books and manuscripts given at a later period by cardinal Besarione. These treasures, which, notwithstanding the arrangements professedly for their safety, have been much neglected and injured, are now deposited in the ducal palace, and will be noticed in our account of that edifice. The *Biblioteca Antica* has lost its literary character, but it stands connected with Petrarch, for the preservation of whose library it was intended, and therefore recalls to mind that extraordinary poet, whose attachment to Venice, where he found refuge while the plague raged at Padua, is so strongly expressed in his *Epistles*. The place brought before us the picture of the great literary and gifted Italian, supplied in one of his own letters, seated with the archbishop of *Patria*, enjoying a delicious prospect of the sea from his windows on a bright summer's evening, when the conversation was interrupted by the appearance of a galley, decked with flags and green boughs, and manned with sailors wearing garlands round their caps, bringing the intelligence of the suppression of the revolt in Candia.

Turning round the west corner of the Piazzetta, on the mole, with the canal in front, you see another of Sansovino's works, called the

Zecca or Mint, from which the gold coin of the republic derived the name of zecchino. In front of the open space and landing steps of the Piazzetta, are the two lofty columns mentioned in the historical part of this book which appear so prominently in the pictures of that part of Venice. They are of granite, and came from Constantinople—trophies of Venetian victories in the Turkish wars. Such transported pillars would look out of their place anywhere but in Venice, which derives its unique character from its being the treasury of all manner of foreign spoils. They are very ancient, and their capitals are grotesque in ornament. The right-hand column, looking towards the sea, is surmounted by a figure of St. Theodore, the patron saint of Venice till St. Mark took his place, standing on a stretched-out crocodile, wielding a sword in his *left* hand, and holding a shield in his right; to indicate, we are told, that the republic reserved her main strength for her own defence. The left-hand column is surmounted by the lion of St. Mark. It shared the fate of the four horses after the fall of the city, and was taken to Paris, whence, like its companions, it was restored to its old place after the peace. Three pillars were brought together from Constantinople, but the third was lost in the mud of the lagoons during an attempt to land it. The two which are preserved, after being brought to shore, are said to have remained prostrate on the quay for some time before any one could raise them. Their erection was at length achieved by Nicolo

Barattiero, or Nick the Black-leg, who, as a reward for the task, obtained the right of carrying on between the columns those games of chance which were forbidden elsewhere. To neutralize the privilege, however, (and the fact is a curious illustration of the way in which the republic adhered to the letter of a promise, and yet broke it in spirit,) it was enacted afterwards that public executions should take place between the columns—an arrangement which made the spot a most unlucky one in the estimation of the people, and effectually deterred them from ever risking their fortune there, or even crossing the boundary line which enclosed it.

The west front of the ducal palace forms the east side of the Piazzetta ; the south front runs along the whole, and looks out upon the sea. These are its most ancient portions. The rest is of a date subsequent to the revival of the classical style. The front, overlooking the Piazzetta, is composed of two rows of arcades, one above the other ; the lower a colonnade, the upper a gallery, surmounted by a very large and lofty surface of wall of a pale reddish marble, pierced by five great windows. The judgments of architects on this singular composition are strangely at variance. "The ducal palace," says Mr. Wood, "is even more ugly than anything I have previously mentioned. Considered in detail, I can imagine no alteration to make it tolerable ; but if this lofty wall had been set back behind the two stories of little arches, it would have been a noble production." This is the opinion of one who belongs to the

classical school Mr. Ruskin, on the other hand, who belongs to the romantic school, pronounces it, though in many respects imperfect, "a piece of rich and fantastic colour, as lovely a dream as ever filled the imagination;" and he adds, "the proportioning of the columns and walls of the lofty story is so lovely and so varied, that it would need pages of description before it could be fully understood." The contrary verdicts are accounted for by the different principles of taste maintained by these gentlemen. Unscientific strangers will probably be as much divided in their opinions of this edifice as are these accomplished critics, though incapable of explaining the grounds of difference. For ourselves we must confess, though not reconciled to the bald expanse of wall resting on arcades, or to its reddish tint, which looks as if the material were brick, we yet intensely admire the arcades themselves. They are eminently Venetian, and seem to concentrate the beauties of the more ancient specimens of architecture which here and there grace the sides of the Grand Canal. "That architecture," to employ the eloquent language of Ruskin, "began with the luxuriance in which all others expired—it founded itself on the Byzantine, mosaic, and fretwork, and laying aside its ornaments one by one, while it fixed its forms by laws more and more severe, stood forth at last a model of domestic Gothic, so grand, so complete, so nobly systematized, that to my mind there never existed an architecture with so stern a claim to our reverence. I do not

except even the Greek Doric. The Doric has cast nothing away; the fourteenth-century Venetian had cast away one by one, for a succession of centuries, every splendour that wealth and art could give it. It had laid down its crown and its jewels, its gold and its colour, like a king disrobing; it had resigned its exertion like an athlete reposing; once capricious and fantastic, it had bound itself by laws inviolable and serene as those of nature herself. It retained nothing but its beauty and its power; both the highest, but both restrained. I do not know of so magnificent a marking of human authority as the iron grasp of the Venetian over his own exuberance of imagination; the calm and solemn restraint with which, his mind filled with thoughts of flowing leafage and fiery life, he gives those thoughts expression for an instant, and then withdraws within those massy bars and levelled cusps of stone."

The front described is in the Byzantine style of the fourteenth century, and belongs to the palace as rebuilt by the doge Marino Faliero, on the site of three former palaces successively destroyed. The first was built in 820, and destroyed by the populace in 970. The second was consumed in a great conflagration which extended over a third of Venice in 1120. It was burned a second time, after which Faliero began another, of which the façade we have noticed forms a part. The side which faces the sea is of the fifteenth century. It should be added that the level of the sea at Venice having risen every century about three inches, it has



been necessary also to raise the pavement of the mole and Piazzetta, consequently part of the columns of the lower tier of arches has been covered up, giving them a somewhat stunted appearance, which did not originally belong to them. In the days of the republic, the walk in the lower arcade was the famous Broglio, well known as the resort of the Venetian merchants. Different derivations have been given of the name; one is that it comes from the word "*imbrogliare*," signifying to embroil, but too characteristic of the proceedings of the place; the other, that it originated in the circumstance that the whole Piazza of St. Mark was at first the "*brolo*," or garden of the monks of San Zaccaria. "It is only in this Broglio," says Dr. Moore, writing from Venice a few years before the fall of the republic, "and at council that the Venetian nobility have opportunities of meeting together, for they seldom visit openly or in a familiar way in each other's houses, and secret meetings would give umbrage to the state inquisitors; they choose, therefore, to transact their business in this public walk. People of inferior rank seldom remain on the Broglio for any length of time when the nobility are there."

The Porta della Carta, at the north end of the façade of the palace fronting the Piazzetta, is an entrance into the quadrangle immediately opposite the broad and majestic Giant's Staircase. The quadrangle is very fine. The west side is a part of the old palace of Faliero, with a blank wall over the gallery, in the stern Byzantine style which we have described. On the southern

and eastern sides, along which both the gallery and the arcade underneath are continued, you observe portions of the less ancient structure built after the fire in the sixteenth century, with specimens of elaborate Italian decoration. The romantic and the classical here face each other. The two great eras of art present in contiguity characteristic specimens. In the middle are two noble fountains of sculptured bronze, the one by Nicolo di Marco, dated 1536, the other by Alfonso Alberghetti, in 1539. The Giant's Staircase, with the beautiful façade of the Corte de' Senatori on the left-hand side, of course, from its historical associations as well as its architectural magnificence, invites one to ascend. All is of marble, wrought into the most elegant ornamental forms that the chisel could carve, with two statues, which from their size give an appellation to the staircase, crowning the top. They represent Mars and Neptune. The traveller naturally stops at the head of the staircase to think of the coronation of the doges which used to take place there, and also to moralize on the execution of Faliero. But Faliero was not beheaded there. The staircase is of more recent date than his day. The lion's staircase, now pulled down, and which ran up to the same gallery at the opposite or southern end of it, was the scene of that memorable tragedy. Proceeding along the gallery to the right, one notices in the hall an inscription commemorating the visit of Henry III. of France to Venice in 1574, and next to that the opening, now despoiled, of the gaping lion's mouth which

covered it, that expressive symbol of its purpose, for it was provided for the reception of accusations against the enemies of the state. Many a false charge was there dropped in, to be followed by an unjust committal, and perhaps merciless death. He who once came under the power of the terrible Venetian inquisition indeed found himself in the lion's jaws. At the end of the gallery are busts of Dandolo and M. Foscarino. There is still a descending staircase winding on the inside of the gallery. The lion's staircase, we suppose, was in the same locality, only on the outside instead of the inside. Returning from the staircase just mentioned, you find yourself presently at the foot of another, ascending to the interior of the building. This is the golden staircase, the *Scala d'Oro*, of marble and gold, the ceiling embossed and adorned with bas-reliefs and arabesques. It was built in 1577. Two flights of steps conduct to apartments grand in themselves, and doubly interesting from their connexion with Venetian history.

Reaching the landing-place, the visitor enters an ante-chamber filled with books, through which he passes into the first of that range of state apartments so full of historical recollections. It is the famous *Sala del Maggior Consiglio*, or hall of the great council, one hundred and seventy-five feet long, and eighty-four broad, and fifty-one in height. It is now the depository of the library of St. Mark, including not only a large collection of printed works, but the manuscripts bequeathed by Petrarch, and other literary

treasures. One remarks among the volumes, evidently not often opened, many in red binding, with an N lettered in gold on the back, indicating that they had made a journey to Paris, with the rest of the treasures pillaged by Napoleon. The emperor seems, however, to have had them bound afresh—a payment, as it proved after their restoration, for the temporary possession of them. But we forget the library in looking at the huge historical pictures which adorn the saloon. Those on the north wall, eleven in number, have been referred to in an earlier part of this work, as containing a series of illustrations of the visit of Alexander III. to Venice, and the events connected with it. Besides these is a painting of Paradise by Tintoretto. On the west side of the hall there are three pictures, and on the south seven, by Paul Veronese, and others relating to the battles and victories of the republic, particularly those at Constantinople. It is over these large pictures, and forming a frieze round the room, that the doges' portraits are placed, with the blank space left where Faliero's would have hung but for his treason and punishment. The inscription is there, "*Hic est locus Marini Pulieri, decapitati pro criminibus.*" The portraits, from the size of the room, appear very small, and would be little noticed if the visitor did not go prepared to examine them; and the little blank space that we had so often imagined a conspicuous object in this room, as it was in our thoughts, as painted there in our historical studies, might have been passed over entirely

had we not eagerly sought it out as an object of significance. We have not time to speak of the sculpture and other works of art which this hall contains; we can only add that our mind was chiefly occupied in reflections upon the assemblies of Venetian statesmen that used to be gathered within its walls, not forgetting that fine scene which occurred here when Zeno the admiral appealed to his enemies as they were plotting his ruin in those eloquent words: "I look through your benches without being able to recognise a single individual among you who has shed one drop of blood for his country. Turn to these, (pointing to his officers,) and to myself, on the other hand. We have fought, we have conquered, we have borne the heat and burden of war. Our fortunes, our limbs, our lives, have been devoted for your protection; and in return for the countless forms of death which we have encountered, as a recompense for our toils, wounds, and perils, we are now menaced with chains and dungeons. Never, never let the republic, saved by our activity, be dishonoured by your ingratitude. Debate now, and decide according to your pleasure." Scenes of grave deliberation, of fierce debate, of august splendour, of proud ceremonial, have been witnessed in this chamber. But all is gone now. The place looks silent and desolate, yet it has a voice, and these are its words, "The fashion of this world passeth away."

Adjoining the hall of the great council is the Sala dello Scrutinio, or hall of scrutiny. The

series of ducal portraits is continued here, closing with the doge Manin, under whom the republic ended. It too has historical pictures, eleven in number, illustrating events in the history of Venice, and including one large production by Jacopo Palma on that awful subject the day of judgment. A moral was doubtless meant in placing it here. It was the chamber for proceedings connected with the ballot so often employed in the choice of Venetian magistrates. Here the scrutineers examined the balls on the election of a doge, and it is curious to remember that while the presence of strangers was interdicted in the hall of the grand council, any citizen might be admitted here while a scrutiny was going on, provided he entered the open doors unarmed.

Upon the next story, on the eastern side of the palace, there are other remarkable rooms. Passing through the *Sala delle Quattro Porte*, so called from four doors in it designed by Palladio, and containing some large historical pictures—and then through the *Ante-Collegio*, or guard-room, hung with four paintings in Tintoretto's best style, where ambassadors and other personages of distinction waited to be introduced to the head of the Venetian republic, we enter the *Sala del Collegio*, or presence-chamber, in which the doge and the privy council were seated to receive them. The room remains as it was when Venice fell. The ceiling is very rich, and would require many pages for a description of its paintings and other ornaments. The fine frieze, the noble chimney-

piece, and the paintings on the walls, we must also pass over. This splendid apartment still retains the ducal throne, and the rest of the stalls, twenty-seven altogether, with their crimson cushions, on which sat the last dignitaries of the old republic. The place forcibly brings before us the etiquette of the Venetian court, and we seem to see some foreign minister making his appearance with letters from his prince, which are read aloud by the chancellor, after which the first councillor on the right of the doge rises from his seat to give place to the ambassador, who there enters into conversation with his highness as if he were in private council.

A door on the right, formed of jasper and other marbles, introduces to the Sala dello Senato, or senate hall, the principal room on the floor, like the rest, decorated with paintings, among which the works of the indefatigable Tintoretto appear again. On the ceiling, too, is a production from his pencil, in the midst of contributions by other artists. Stalls still line the sides of this majestic room, besides which there were formerly seven ranges occupying the middle of the floor. The senate here deliberated on political affairs in peace and war, on treaties and domestic policy ; here they prepared drafts of laws, and nominated commanders and ambassadors. One can easily imagine the appearance of the hall when it was furnished with cushions and hangings, and the throne of the doge was richly adorned, and the light was shaded by superb oriental hangings, in addition

to the magnificent decorations which it now retains—when, too, it was occupied by the Council of Ten, the inquisitors of state, the procurators of St. Mark, and the rest of the senatorial body, presided over by the doge, attended by his six councillors, secretaries, and chancellors, all in their appropriate costume, brocades and silks, rendered more brilliant by the divers insignia of official rank. It should be remembered, in calling to mind the meetings in this old chamber, that the most solemn of them were held at night. Still may be seen some of the gold branches which used to support the wax candles during the nocturnal deliberations.

Adjoining the hall of the senate is the chapel, containing an altar by Scamozzi and a Madonna by Sansovino. The chapel is small, and presents nothing worthy of remark, having been only a private oratory for the doge. A small staircase close by has a fresco by Titian, the only one remaining in Venice.

There is another most interesting suite of three rooms on the same floor, formerly devoted to the use of the Council of Ten, which the visitor acquainted with Venetian history will be sure specially to notice. The Sala della Bussola is an antechamber, with a ceiling painted by Paul Veronese, and presenting a long picture on the wall representing the reduction of Brescia and the submission of Bergamo. There is another painting between the windows of the doge superstitiously presented to the Virgin. By the side of the door



is the little wicket belonging to the lion's mouth, which received denunciations against persons touching offences that came under the cognizance of the tribunal occupying these rooms. Along the left wall were six desks for the secretaries of the inquisitors of state and the Council of Ten. The benches all around served for persons summoned to appear as witnesses or as accused. "Here they attended—here they trembled."

The hall of the Council of Ten has a ceiling partly by Paul Veronese, and a frieze by Zelotti. Yet neither these ornaments nor the three historical pictures on the walls obtain much notice, compared with the deep but painful interest which all must feel in thinking of the uses for which this apartment was originally employed. Here is the very centre of that terrible jurisdiction which almost always recurs to our mind when the name of Venice is pronounced—that irresponsible and despotic authority which lorded itself over the liberty and lives of the most powerful citizens—that agency which from its secrecy and mysteriousness seemed like something supernatural. Knowing what human nature is, and how men freed from accountability to their fellows are apt to trample on the principles of justice in their eagerness to retain the power they possess, especially when existence would be jeopardized by its loss, we cannot but feel sure that there must have been proceedings going on in this awful room of a character the thought of which makes us tremble. Admitting that the atroci-

ties of this court may have been somewhat exaggerated, yet history records enough of its doings; and our knowledge of fallen humanity under such circumstances as this inquisition created, sufficiently shows what it must have been to convince us that nowhere else, except in Rome and Seville, has there been so much of iniquity perpetrated under the name of justice. It would show an absence of right moral feeling not to be moved with indignation at the thought of the scenes once enacted on this spot; and connecting that thought with our irrepressible conviction of a righteous Governor in heaven, we are irresistibly led to anticipate, as beyond all doubt, the coming of an hour when he will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and when men shall be judged by him according to their works. There we ruminate as we think of the time when the seventeen stalls around the room were occupied by the ten councillors, with the doge and his six assistants, when the secretaries were seated at their desks, and witnesses were examined, and the accused stood in the midst alone and undefended, with the doom of captivity or death before him. Of course in many of the trials here, whatever may be thought of the sentence inflicted, guilt, and that of a heavy kind, was proved against the accused. The place was not always a slaughter-house for innocence, a butchery for men guilty of light offence. Grave crimes against the state were here disclosed, and the memory especially dwells on that night in the April of 1355, when Marino Faliero, a

traitor to the government of which he was the head, was arraigned before his old companions in office, and when the sword of justice, covered with crape, was placed on the throne which he had been wont himself to fill.

Next to the hall of the Council of Ten is the cabinet of the inquisitors of state, the three out of the ten in whom there was a concentration of the highest power of the state. The room is very much altered, having now the appearance of "a café decorated in bad taste." But the ceiling, the inlaid floor, and the chimney-piece are the same as when the three used to sit here in dire conclave. What mainly fixed our attention were the two doors and the passages connected with them leading to the cells of the inquisition. Those doors, those passages, those cells!—who that has ever seen them but must retain their image burnt into the memory? One door opens upon a narrow winding passage and staircase which leads up to the roof. Here were the famous "piombi," or leads, places of confinement, dark, close, and intensely hot, even when we were there, though they are now much better than they used to be. We cannot think of those prisons without feeling astonished at some modern attempts which have been made to represent them as after all not very disagreeable residences.

The piombi are bad enough, but they are far exceeded in horror by the pozzi, or dungeons. We descended to them by another narrow winding staircase, which awakened indescribable sensations, and brought over the mind a

rush of fearful associations relative to the hapless victims dragged down this avenue, no more to see the light of day, and soon to lose the light of life. We entered the dungeons. They are square. The walls and the roof as well as the floor of some are covered with boards, and there remains a sort of slab which served for the captive's bed. The only light admitted is by a small hole opening into the narrow passage that runs by the low doorway, and that passage is only lighted by a series of small apertures, corresponding with these dismal little windows in the cells. Only so much of light is admitted as literally to make the darkness visible. Some of the cells have now no boarding over the grim stone walls; our cicerone, however, who evidently wished to mitigate our idea of the horrors of the place, stated that formerly they were all boarded, yet he admitted there was a distinction between cells for prisoners before confession and afterwards. The lowest dungeons we saw were above the level of the water. Our guide assured us that there were none lower, and that the statement of cells under the line of the canal was "an idle dream," "a perfect phantasy." There certainly seems no access to any beneath those which we examined; but whether any such did exist and have since been stopped up we cannot tell. In the notes to "Childe Harold," where, by the way, the author makes a mistake in describing the dungeons as forming *three* stories, it is observed: "Only one prisoner was found when the republicans

descended into these hideous recesses, and he is said to have been confined sixteen years. But the inmates of the dungeons beneath had left traces of their repentance or despair which are still visible, and which may perhaps owe something to recent ingenuity. Some of the detained appear to have offended against, and others to have belonged to the sacred body, not only from their signatures, but from the churches and belfries which they have scratched upon the wall."

Ascending from the lower dungeons, we reach the passage to the famous Bridge of Sighs. This is a building of marble, covered on both sides and on the top, very narrow and very lofty, and through the windows affording a glimpse of the canal which runs under it. At the further end is the fatal closet where the condemned were placed in a chair and strangled. The Bridge of Sighs connects the ducal palace with the public prison, a large edifice, partly in the Rustic, partly in the Doric style, the whole wearing that aspect of gloomy strength which harmonizes with the purpose of the structure. Howard visited it in one of his tours of benevolence, and remarks, "It is one of the strongest I ever saw. There were between three and four hundred prisoners, many of them confined in loathsome and dark cells for life, executions here being very rare. There was no fever or prevailing disorder in this close prison. None of the prisoners had irons. On weighing the bread allowance I found it fourteen ounces. I asked some of them who

had been confined many years in dark cells whether they should prefer the galleys. They all answered in the affirmative, so great a blessing is light and air." He mentions a charitable society for the relief of prisoners, and describes the galleys moored near the shore as generally dirty and crowded, concluding his statement with the following fact: "I saw a slave dead on the shore, who, I supposed, destroyed himself in despair, as he could have no hope of an escape by swimming because of his heavy irons."

## CHAPTER III.

## THE DUOMO.

THE Duomo, or St. Mark's Church, as it now appears, was begun in 977. An edifice for religious worship was reared on this site as early as 828. A hundred years are said to have elapsed ere the outer shell of the building was finished; and, in its present state, it is evidently the result of many centuries of labour. From time to time parts have been added or adorned, constituting a whole, which, though remarkably congruous, is greatly diversified. A correct delineation of it may be given in drawings, but it cannot be so described in words; by no drawings, however, any more than by words, can that impression be produced on the mind which is received from the sight of this unique edifice.

Its *façade*, in spite of its great grandeur, has a little of a toy-like look when seen in the glaring sun, and from the great height of the neighbouring buildings the effect of the elevation is somewhat impaired. We candidly state these drawbacks in the first instance, and the building can well bear them. The effect of the

columns, which are of verd antique and other precious marbles, rising tier above tier, is very grand. So is that of the gallery, exhibiting the four gilt bronze horses, and the elaborately decorated row of quaint eastern-looking gables, and open tabernacles at the top. One great peculiarity is that the columns and other portions of the *façade* were not originally made for it, but have been brought from different places, and are only accommodated to their present positions, presenting a strangely heterogeneous assemblage of costly things—a trophy of spoils, to which symmetry has been, however, given by the hands that arranged them. But the mosaics in the open spaces between the arches are perhaps the most remarkable of all in a stranger's eyes. There are five in the recesses over the doorways. The removal of St. Mark's body from Alexandria is the subject of the first two to the right; the centre contains a representation of the last judgment; the next, the magistrates venerating the saint's remains; and the last—a picture of the church itself. The four on the top, in the ogee arched gables, comprise the descent from the cross, the entrance into Hades, and our Lord's resurrection and ascension. The small pieces of differently coloured stones which, curiously tessellated together, present a smooth and polished surface, produce the effect of paintings by eminent masters, of which indeed they form copies. They are a sort of coloured engraving, taken from originals by Zanchi and Maffeo Verona. They are of different dates, the earliest only 1650,



the latest 1727. The archivolts are richly embossed with figures, amongst which, with patience, the eye may trace out prophets, evangelists, and manifold myths and allegories. The lion, with the Gospel of Mark, in the middle arch above, and the four horses on the gallery underneath, are conspicuous objects. The latter are of little interest as works of art: but when it is remembered that they come from the Hippodrome at Constantinople; that before their removal thither they stood on a triumphal arch at Rome; that they were brought to the imperial city by Augustus from Alexandria; and that after all these vicissitudes—after the lapse of nearly two thousand years,—they were carried to Paris, and then returned to the position they had occupied for so many centuries,—not only do they appear monuments of high antiquity, but symbols of regions and events far remote and long gone by, surrounding the spectator with shadows of great historic names, and reviving in him the memory of momentous eras. Standing beneath these horses, the mind seems carried over a realm of characters and incidents twice crossed by a millennium.

The five doors are of bronze; passing through them the vestibule is entered, which runs along the whole length of the front. Here again are large mosaics, glittering with gold and shining in brilliant colours; the one over the central entrance to the body of the church, representing St. Mark, the patron saint, being very conspicuous. Around these are crowds of columns

brought from the east. The church partakes of the character of a museum. The entrance is in harmony with the rest. Three doors connect the vestibule with the interior. The centre is of Venetian workmanship, so is the left; the right is Greek.

A detailed account of the interior of this extraordinary church is impossible; we can only notice a few striking objects, and give some general impressions. An air of gloom pervades the building, though it did not appear to be quite so deep as some descriptions prepare one for. The breaking of the prevalent shadows by the light darting from an Italian sun through the comparatively small windows, especially the broader streams, which flowed along the transepts, meeting in the middle, and cutting in two the deeper regions of shadow in nave and choir, was full of bold pictorial effect. The building is in the shape of a Greek cross, and its form gradually unfolds to you as you walk along the broad aisle of the nave. On either side are rows of classic columns, supporting galleries, the lower parts of which are polished into an almost mirror-like surface by the friction of the multitudes who have stood, and knelt, and pressed against them. Enormous arches sweep above these galleries. In the middle, overhead, is a series of domes, letting in light, from one of which is suspended a gorgeous cross. The tessellated pavement has been worn away into furrows and undulations by the footsteps of many generations, or by some sinking of this portion

of the building. Arrived under the centre dome, we see the transept opening right and left. A noble screen is in front of the choir, and is composed of eight marble columns, supporting an architrave surmounted by fourteen statues, the whole wearing a Greek aspect, with a classic touch upon it. Looking up, we see dome separated from dome by a broad band of gloomy arching, the choir being terminated in an apsis, crowned by a semi-dome. Mosaics meet the eye everywhere, on wall and roof. Such is the general character.

Several of the chapels, altars, and works of art in this edifice we must pass over unmentioned. Entering but a little into detail, we may notice a porphyry basin to the right of the chief entrance, on an altar of Greek workmanship; and the baptistry of St. John, with a magnificent marble basin, crowned with a bronze cover, which sustains a statue of the Baptist. Here is a monument to the doge, Andrea Dandolo, the last of his rank buried in St. Mark's. The chapel of the cross stands by the corner of the north transept, and is remarkable for a column of very rare porphyry. In the interior of the choir, where the depth of shadow renders the minute examination of its curiosities difficult, a very prominent object, amidst a number which anywhere else would rivet long attention, is the high altar, with its baldacchino or canopy. The four columns of this canopy are covered with sculpture, each containing nine compartments, full of figures, representing, we are told, the history of Christ. There are

eight bronze figures, by Sansovino, at the side of the high altar, exquisitely formed, and deserving, as works of art, of minute inspection. The inlaid wood around the choir is full of arabesques and historical and legendary figures. A second altar stands behind the high one, also supported by four columns, which, they tell you, came from the Temple at Jerusalem—perhaps they did come from some mosque there. Turning round to look at the domes over the transept and nave, the eye ranges over the immense spaces of wall and roof covered with mosaics, some of the figures seeming as though they were magnified shadows of people sprawling about below in very grotesque attitudes. Many of the representations are in the style of mediæval drawings in illuminated missals. One we particularly noticed on the centre dome, intended for St. Mark, in a sitting attitude, with the exposed limb and profuse drapery about the leg which are often seen in paintings of the thirteenth century. The sacristy, to which entrance from the choir is obtained by a door that it took Sansovino twenty years to execute, is a spacious apartment, full of mosaics, the pale green and deep lilac of which are truly charming specimens of colour.

The treasury of St. Mark is in a room at the further end of the south transept. Here are in the first place very curious objects of art—the sword of pope Alexander VIII., the crosier of the patriarch of Venice, and some of the imperial regalia. Besides these are embossed covers of missals, candelabra in crystal, and cups of the

same material. But above all the store of curious and cunning work which this place displays, is the *pala d'oro*, or altar-piece of gold. It is of Byzantine work, and represents a number of incidents, including some from legendary lives of St. Mark. It is formed of three panels, and is a valuable specimen of the state of Greek art in the tenth century, the era of its manufacture. Among the antiques is a stone chair, with a Coptic inscription, said to have been brought from Egypt with the body of St. Mark. Numerous relics are preserved here, illustrating the marvellous credulity of the Roman Catholic church. The priests show what they pretend to be some of the earth which was soaked with the Saviour's blood; a stone thrown at the martyr Stephen; a piece of the column at which Christ was scourged; one of the nails used at the crucifixion; a tiny portion of Christ's robe; several fragments of the true cross; and what we understood to be, a tooth of the whale which swallowed Jonah. The reliquaries, or cases of gold and precious stones in which these are enveloped, show, from their form and workmanship, that they are objects of great antiquity; but the imposture, from the very nature of the objects said to be exhibited, is of the most barefaced description, and the antiquity really attached to them only shows the length of time that this kind of superstition must have prevailed, and makes us mourn all the more at the thought of the multitudes that must have been deluded by these vanities and falsehoods, and must consequently

have miserably mistaken the nature of the true religion of Christ.

Returning into the church from the treasury, and pacing along the transepts, a curious mosaic on the end wall of the northern side arrests the eye. It consists of a large tree, with a number of persons sitting on the branches, as if they were so many monstrous birds. It is in fact a genealogical tree, and the figures on the branches are intended to represent the leading personages in the line from which our Lord descended as to his human nature, while Adam lies at the foot of the trunk, or rather appears as the root itself from which springs the main stem with its dependent branches. A similar design appears in one of the windows of Cologne cathedral, and another of a like kind, except that David instead of Adam is represented as the root, may be seen in the old church of the village of Dorchester, in Oxfordshire. Pausing in the centre, between the transepts just before the choir, under the grand cupola, and looking all round, the four main divisions of this wonderful church, with its chapels, screens, altars, galleries, columns, marbles, and mosaics, run out into so many broad vistas, formed by piles upon piles of manifold, magnificent, and curious things. Jasper, porphyry, crimson alabaster, serpentine, verd antique, granite, and marble beautifully veined, are seen built up and imbedded in all directions. Upon the spot just indicated, we may call to mind the imposing scene once witnessed there, when six knights from the king of France

mounted the steps of the choir, and, in the presence of the doge and the high dignitaries of the state, appealed to the citizens who were thronging the aisles, to assist in the holy war for the recovery of Christ's sepulchre from the hands of the infidels. From the upper pulpit, which stands on the left, supported by columns of costly marble, old Henry Dandolo addressed the people, offering to go and command the fleet. With these associations, full of chivalry and romance, others of a different order will fill the mind of the Christian traveller. In all probability he will witness some kind of worship going on during his visit. Perhaps he may see high mass performed in all its splendour, with crowds of priests filling the choir, and the archbishop on his throne with a mitre in his hand, while music, probably more boisterous than beautiful, fills the ample space, and flows and echoes from arch to arch, and from pillar to pillar, and multitudes of men and women occupy the nave, engaged apparently in earnest devotion. All this will blend with recollections of the past. The spectator will think of the popish worship for so many ages performed in that gorgeous choir. He will be affected by remembering the ignorance and superstition which must have originated such worship. He will muse on the strange perversion of the spiritual religion of Christ which this involves. He will dwell on the wide-spread apostasy of which the services there performed—presenting only a specimen of what prevails through a large portion of Europe—are the sad signs and illustratio

And if his mind be perplexed by the fact of such corruption having been permitted by Divine wisdom, he will yet see that it is only in mysterious harmony with other forms of Divine permission ; those, for example, under which Judaism was nullified by human traditions, and patriarchal institutes became blended with idolatry, or superseded by it, and man fell, and angels apostatized. Nor will he forget that the reign of the man of sin was predicted, and that the coming termination of that reign is foretold.

But turning from these meditations to look at the building again, we may observe that the mosaics are best seen from the galleries which run over the side aisles of the nave, and there, too, the general character of the edifice may be best studied. The upper part, consisting of domes and arches, is composed of plain surfaces without mouldings or the other usual accessories of Greek or Gothic architecture. The whole effect is produced by a few bold single lines skilfully grouped, and gracefully intersecting each other. The lower parts, consisting of galleries and screens, present an abundance of parallel vertical lines, as if tall trees and shrubs were growing up under the shadow of a dark conservatory. While, above, the only adornments are the huge, dreamy-looking mosaics ; below are Corinthian capitals in varied masses of coloured marble, and a confused display of Byzantine work, the whole resting on a richly tessellated pavement. Thus lighter at the top, the building deepens into



shade below, while a centre of radiance appears between the transepts under the middle dome, throwing the choir again into partial gloom; from amidst which its brilliant ornaments come out with surprising effect.

No comparisons can help us in the description of St. Mark's, because it is so unlike any of the cathedrals which we find in England and other parts of Europe. It is neither Gothic nor classic. So far as any one word can describe it, it may be called Byzantine, oriental,—or mosque-like. But its architecture, after all, is not so peculiar as the indescribable collection of marbles and works of foreign art which it includes. For the purpose of giving a final impression respecting the number and variety of these, we cannot do better than record the question asked for ages, as ships entered the Venetian port during the period of her wars, and her successful merchandise, "What do you *bring* for St. Mark?" and the response given to those who offered ransom, "What will you *give* to St. Mark?"

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE CHURCHES.

NEXT to the edifices already mentioned, the churches in Venice are most remarkable. Only a few of them can be noticed here.

The oldest of the existing churches, after St. Mark's, is that called Santa Maria Gloriosa de' Frari, generally known among the Venetians by the brief appellation of the "*Frari*." It was begun in 1250. The front of the church is by no means striking, and bears no comparison with many of that date elsewhere. The door, however, is adorned with some arabesque work. On entering the structure, the stranger, familiar with our English cathedral architecture of that date, will recognise some of its peculiarities in the general outline and character of the building. It is early Gothic, but the details are chiefly of the Byzantine cast. There is a lofty nave, with pillars and pointed arches separating the middle from the side aisles. The choir is enclosed by a marble screen, and is fitted up with carved wooden stalls and a pulpit at each end. It had the most of an English appearance about it of all we saw in this city of churches. The high

altar is separated from the choir by a broad passage uniting the transepts. All round are chapels, and these, with the monuments and paintings on the walls, constitute the chief objects of interest to the strangers who visit this ancient building. Titian is buried near the second altar, to whose memory a costly monument has recently been erected by the emperor of Austria.\* Several persons of distinguished name in the history of Venice are buried here. The unhappy doge Foscari is among them, whose monument, erected by his grandson, the child of the unhappy exile Giacompo, is a fine work of art. Opposite to his monument is another, celebrating the famous doge Nicolo Tron, a man of princely fortune, who died in 1472 ; under whose reign Cyprus was acquired by the Venetians as a dependency. The work is of gigantic dimensions, and is composed of six stories ; nineteen figures, of the size of life, are introduced into this elaborate composition. The monument of Melchior Trevisan is a very beautiful piece of sculpture, and, from its simplicity, contrasts with the gorgeous decorations of that erected to Nicolo Tron. A monument to the Orsini is in the northern transept. A fine votive picture, by Titian, hangs over the Pesaro altar, representing the Virgin with the Saviour in her arms ; St. Francis, St. Peter, and St. George, with other figures, are introduced ; the whole pronounced, by competent

\* The opening of it to public view took place a few days after we left Venice, and was expected to be a pageant of considerable splendour.

critics, as worthy of his fame who painted it. Another immense monument occurs on the left-hand side of the church, in which colossal Moors, with limbs and features in black marble, and their dress in white, appear sustaining a huge entablature, on which sits enthroned a doge named Giovanni Pesaro, by no means illustrious. This tomb, as well as some others, is an example, as Le Comte remarks, of the memorial of a man when dead being in an inverse proportion to his importance when living—an observation illustrated in many other churches besides this at Venice. Near it is a monument to Canova. The great sculptor sleeps in the northern aisle just opposite to the great painter, who is buried in the southern. It is curious that Canova planned a monument for Titian which was appropriated by him as a design for the tomb of an Austrian archduchess, and that the self-same plan was adopted for the erection of the present memorial over his own remains. Several eminent sculptors were employed in the execution, but the general effect is unworthy of their arduous toil, and is no good specimen of the eminent designer's taste. The work cost above £4,000, which was raised by an European subscription, England contributing one-fourth.

The archives of Venice are preserved in what were formerly the conventual buildings attached to the church. There is the famous golden book, in a series of volumes, containing a record of the births and marriages of the Venetian nobility. There are also original letters

by Charles v., Francis I., and Henry IV.; and the correspondence of the Venetian ambassador at Paris with his own government, relating the assassination of the last of these monarchs. The archives of the Council of Ten were burned in 1508. Other documents have since been destroyed. There only remain copies of arrests issued by that body. The inquisitors of state wrote little; they dared not trust their secrets to paper. Hence most of the history of Venice, as connected with their proceedings, remains in its ancient obscurity. But various manuscripts exist illustrative of the past, the value of which is not likely soon to be particularly ascertained, inasmuch as the collection altogether numbers above eight hundred thousand volumes, perhaps the largest mass of written paper in the world.

The next church to be noticed is SS. Giovanni e Paolo, begun earlier than the Frari, but not finished till 1390. It stands on one of the open spaces in Venice called Campi—the largest of the kind—in the midst of which is an equestrian statue of Bartolomeo Colleoni da Bergamo. He was a celebrated general in the service of the republic. The front of this church is very unsightly, being, like some others in Italy, left in an unfinished state, the rough brick having never been coated with marble, or otherwise completed, in conformity with its original design. The doorway is rather richly executed, and gives an idea of what the *façade* would have been if carried out in harmony with this fragment of the original plan. The magnificence of the edifice is within.

It is very spacious, of cathedral dimensions, measuring in length 330 feet, across the transepts 142, in breadth of nave 91, in height 123. It is of pointed architecture, but different from ours of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, to which period it belongs. The pillars are placed on pedestals, and have capitals. The arches which spring from these are flat underneath, and have no other ornament than a simple moulded edge. The vaulting in the middle of the nave is square, on the sides long and narrow. There are clerestory windows, but no triforium or gallery. The east end is *apsidal septagonal* in form. The windows there are lancet-shaped, with mullions and transoms. The vaulting forms a crown at top, but there is scarcely any ornament here or elsewhere in the architectural details. A very good stained glass window is placed in the south transept, which is quite a curiosity in Venice; it belongs to the fifteenth century. Like the Frari, the church of Giovanni e Paolo is full of chapels and monuments, the latter of which are the most beautiful and interesting works of the kind to be found in the city. The most distinguished personages are buried here. In this respect it out-rivals the other church just mentioned. Le Comte calls it the Venetian Pantheon. We should rather style it the Westminster Abbey of the republic. Besides many other tombs, which we have not space to notice, there are two very celebrated ones in the great chapel at the eastern end. They face each other. That on the right hand

is Gothic, that on the left Greek. The first is to the memory of Michel Morosini, who died in 1382, and is remarkable for its purity of style, but the second is the gem of the whole collection. It is erected in honour of the doge, Andrea Vendramin, one of the first of the newly ennobled families elevated to the ducal throne. He is represented on his bier, in a state of sleeplike peace and calmness, so as to produce a very touching impression. The architecture of the tomb is very fine, but the basso-relievos and statuettes are its most beautiful features. It is justly said of them by Cicognara that they look as if taken from a Greek gem, so pure are they in outline, so graceful in attitude, so dignified in style; and justly might he pronounce the whole monument as the most perfect work produced by Venetian art. In the same chapel is the mausoleum of the doge Leonardo Loredano—a magnificent work, contrasting in this respect with the simplicity of Morosini's, beside which it is placed. The grand altar of this chapel is of the seventeenth century, and of a showy kind, not harmonizing with the building. Passing over a multitude of monuments of various merit to doges and generals, we may mention the bold wood carving round the chapel of the rosary, with the basso-relievos in **Carrara** marble, which line the wall round the altar. There are several pictures in this church by Tintoretto and others, but the grand object here in the department of painting is the Peter Martyr of Titian. Peter was a Dominican monk of Verona, who was murdered in a wood

as he was returning from a council with one of the brethren of his order. He was canonized on account of his tragical end. The assassination of this ecclesiastic is the subject of the picture. It is certainly a wonderful production, but there are others by Titian which have delighted us more; for example, his picture of St. Jerome in the desert, which is in the Berra at Milan. As a proof of the high estimation in which this production is held, the senate of Venice made a decree forbidding the Dominicans, to whom this church belongs, to sell the picture *under pain of death*. Copies of it are very numerous, and we saw an artist when we were in the church engaged in making one.

La Madonna dell' Orto is another church of the Gothic style, built in the fourteenth century, and presenting some of the principal features of our decorated architecture. This church was once the richest in Venice, but it long suffered very greatly from spoliation and neglect. Repairs have been effected, but it is not likely to regain its ancient splendour. A large St. Christopher, of wood, remains in the choir, and the same popular saint appears among the twelve apostles over the church door. In the building are several pictures, and besides others by Tintoretto, one from his busy pencil representing in a very strange manner the scenes of the last judgment.

San Pietro di Castello is an old building quite modernized. It was the mother church of Venice; it now exhibits the Palladian style



of the seventeenth century. San Zaccaria is a church of the fifteenth century, of mixed styles; but beyond the pointed arches round the choir which are mounted on high pedestals, it exhibits little that bears about it a Gothic stamp. The nave is half Byzantine, and in the church are several paintings, including some very ancient ones. We have enumerated all the churches which were erected previous to the commencement of the Italian style, and it will be seen from our brief descriptions that pure Gothic never took root in Venice. There, as in other parts of Lombardy, such portions of it as may be found are intermixed with other styles. It is observed by Mr. Gally Knight, that "from the influence of classical associations the Gothic style in Italy became and remained widely different from that of the north." But in Lombardy, less than in the south, and in Venice least of all, would classical associations exert an influence upon the mediæval architects. Many peculiarities, it has been added by an able critic, were evidently occasioned by the skilful adaptation of the models furnished by England\* and France, and above all by Germany, to the products of Italian quarries and the brightness of Italian skies. "The profusion of rich marbles encouraged the architects to adopt the external inlayings of various colours which produce the same effect in the mass as the light and shade of deep-cut mouldings. The windows became narrower, the roof more depressed,

\* Mr. Knight shows that Gothic architecture was introduced into Italy from England.

the elevation which cast off the heavy snows of the north being needless in a more genial clime."

Santa Maria de' Miracoli belongs to the transition period in ecclesiastical architecture in Venice, having been built between 1480, and 1489. It is a blending of Byzantine and Italian, rich in marbles without, and in the ornaments of the presbytery and high altar within, the whole, however, now giving signs of decay.

San Salvatore, erected between the years 1500 and 1534, was commenced by Spavento and Julius Lombardo, and finished under the direction of Sansovino. Scamozzi designed the lanterns of the cupolas in 1569, and the front of the church in the Composite style was the work of Longhena in 1663. This church, therefore, presents a mixture of style, but in general character is Italian. It is on the plan of a patriarchal cross, presenting a nave and three recesses, each intersection being covered with a little dome. Several remarkable monuments are found in the interior, among which is a very splendid one by Sansovino, to the doge Francesco Venier, resembling in its general outline the *façade* of a building, and suggesting the idea of a temple rather than a tomb. The high altar is adorned with columns of verd antique, and a picture of the Transfiguration by Titian, and over another altar is the picture of the Annunciation by the same artist, painted when he was almost ninety years of age, and showing that his wonderful genius was beginning to suffer eclipse. The queen of Cyprus is

buried in this church, and in the porch of the monastery attached is the inscription before mentioned, indicating that pope Alexander III. took refuge there.

San Francesco della Vigna is said to be built from a design by Sansovino much altered. The front is by Palladio. This portion bears the impress of that master's style, the rest is unworthy the reputation of the other architect to whom it is ascribed. The cloisters are curious, surrounding a little vineyard and grotto—a quiet out-of-the-way place, suited for meditation upon the past, the distant, and the dead.

Passing by San Sebastiano, where Paul Veronese is buried, and Santa Maria Formosa, now modernized, but in its ancient form the scene of the famous episode of the Brides of Venice, and the church to which the annual commemorative procession was made—we must hasten to notice the two famous churches by Palladio, which every visitor at Venice, however he may neglect other edifices, is sure to visit. The first of these, as to the period of its commencement, is San Giorgio Maggiore; Palladio began it 1556. It stands on the island opposite St. Mark's Place, on the site of the old monastery, celebrated as the haunt of Contarini and others. The porch is of later date than the rest, not having been completed till 1610. The whole, as the name of the architect indicates, is in the classical style, and embraces in its principles and details the Corinthian and the Composite. The interior is more imposing

and beautiful than the exterior. It has a nave and two side aisles. Wood's criticism on the former, that it is too short, and the pedestals of the columns too high, appears to us very just. There are statues in niches in the wall, between the windows, and the marble floor is inlaid in hexagonal shapes. The form of the eastern end is apsidal, and the altar stands forward, a door being placed in the middle of the apsis. The panelling and carving of the stalls are extremely beautiful. Each elbow has a griffin for its support, and a boy riding on a dolphin as its upper ornament. Several pictures adorn this church, including four by Tintoretto. The Last Supper by that artist is a very singular and original composition. There is in a side corridor, a monument to one of the old chiefs of the republic, the doge Dominico Michele, who urged the Venetians to join in the Crusades. An inscription on a pilaster to the left side of the altar announces that pope Gregory XIII. has promised pardon of sin to every one who shall there on the twelfth of the kalends of April offer the prescribed prayers for the expiation of their offences. It makes one shudder to think of a man professing to grant a favour which only God can bestow; and that presumption, so characteristic of the man of sin, who sitteth in the temple of God, exalting himself as if he were God, is only equalled by the ignorance of the way of salvation, or rather the wilful departure from the truth, manifest in the prescription of *certain forms of prayer*, instead of simple, heartfelt, earnest faith in the Divine

Redeemer, as the only method by which sinners can secure acceptance with God. It may be mentioned that there are other pontifical associations connected with this edifice, for here it was that the bishop of Imola, in 1800, was crowned pope, under the name of Pius VII. ; that celebrated pontiff who figures so much in the politics and convulsions of Europe in the early part of the present century, first as the tool of Napoleon's ambition, and then as the victim of his revenge. There is a portrait of this pope in the church.

Il Santissimo Redentore, on the island of Guidecca, is another of Palladio's works, reared as a thanksgiving for the ceasing of the plague which devastated Venice in 1576. Further architectural criticisms would be tedious to our readers, and therefore we must be content with expressing only a qualified admiration of the front of this edifice. With regard to the interior, we may be permitted to add, that the vaulting appears too feeble and low for the gigantic columns, but the dome is very magnificent, and standing under it, the visitor sees the lines of the transepts and the open undivided nave, producing very noble artistic effects. The church is remarkably plain, but it certainly wears an aspect of supreme majesty. Groups of Capuchins at prayer on the pavement are picturesque and poetical, as Byron observes; but the poetry and the picturesqueness are mingled with pity in minds which are alive to the evils of the system with which these persons are identified.

Another famous church in the Palladian style, but of a later date than Palladio himself, is Santa Maria della Salute, erected in 1632, to commemorate the cessation of another great pestilence, which carried off sixty thousand victims. It stands near the Dogana, on the tongue of land which stretches out on the Rialto side of Venice, opposite St. Mark's Place, and is a favourite object with artists in their pictures of the City of the Sea. It is therefore familiar as to its external appearance with most persons, and although it exhibits many defects and violations of severe taste, and is decidedly overloaded with ornament, yet no one can look on its stately dome and princely front without deep admiration. Landing from the canal, ascending the steps of the portico, passing under the elaborate entablature and pediment, the visitor cannot fail to perceive that there must be something of the sublime in art about this far-famed edifice. The architect was Balthazar Longhena, who had to drive in 1,200,000 stakes or piles to make a foundation for his building. The construction of the interior is intricate, but harmonious, and its adornments are very numerous and elaborate, the church in this respect contrasting with Il Redentore. The candelabrum before the high altar is of bronze in the Pompeian style, a rare work of art, and the second in Italy, the candelabrum at Padua being the first. There is a beautiful lamp under the dome. In the sacristy are three Titians—one, representing David in an attitude of thanksgiving, being exceedingly

expressive. The carving of the seats behind the altar is less bold and original than in San Giorgio, but still more delicate in execution. The recumbent figures of the boys on the top are charmingly graceful, and though the attitudes are varied, all are elegant. Marble groups are skilfully arranged about the altar. Upon the demolition of the church of San Geminiano, the remains of the architect Sansovino were removed from their resting-place there, and now repose in the oratory of this building. Maria della Salute is a church which requires several visits to understand and appreciate it, and to discover the many beauties which it contains. For ourselves, it was a high gratification to wander through this edifice and study its parts, proportions, and details, and in doing so we saw what we cannot help noticing here, and what we have often seen in other parts of Italy, an odd mixture of priests and tourists, of formal devotion and sketching—the employment of travellers in such places being at times unseemly and inconsistent with the worship carried on hard by ; but, what is still more remarkable, the officers of a church, and the disciples of a system, distinguished by forms to which so much punctilious observance is claimed, do not seem at all to mind the interruption, but really appear glad to permit it for the sake of a slight pecuniary remuneration.

Were this a guide book, it would be proper to notice particularly several other churches, and to enumerate all the sacred edifices in

Venice; but as our work is intended only to exhibit some of the main features of this interesting city, we shall conclude this portion by observing that the Jesuits' church, built in 1728, is "an extraordinary specimen of the theatrical and luxurious magnificence of the churches of this order;" and that the Greek church, San Giorgio de' Greci, though externally inferior to many, is internally very magnificent, and, as a specimen of the arrangements and ornaments for worship practised by those who constitute the eastern part of Christendom, shows that in pomp and ceremony they are equal to the followers of Rome.

"San Lazzaro, the Armenian convent,\* stands out of the main city on its own island. It was founded about the beginning of the last century by the abbot Mechitar. The church and the conventual buildings are patterns of neatness and good order. The service, like that of the Greeks, is an oriental liturgy, but the Armenians acknowledge the supremacy of the pope, and are in communion with the church of Rome. They have an excellent library, with a great number of curious oriental manuscripts, and the convent may be regarded as a species of metropolis of Armenian literature. Many important works, such as the translation of Eusebius, have been printed here, besides the greater portion of the liturgical and other religious books for the use of their widely dispersed community. The Armenians are amongst the

\* We could not visit this convent, and therefore give a description from the "Guide Book."



most respectable and opulent merchants at Calcutta, and they contribute liberally to the support of this national institution. A large bequest among others was made for the education of a certain number of children here."

## CHAPTER V.

## PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

THE spacious arsenal at Venice, two miles in circuit, is intimately connected with its ancient history, and in its present state is a sign of its subjection. Here were laid up the resources, military and naval, of the old republic. Here are now the Austrian dockyards. It is situated at the southern extremity of Venice. The gateway is one of the characteristic sights of the city. It has huge square towers, with battlements and machicolations, but rather different from our mediæval ones. Each is a double tower, an upper and smaller one rising out of that beneath. The entrance to the arsenal is through a sort of triumphal arch in the Roman style, erected in 1460. On the attic, with a pediment of later date, stands a statue of Santa Giustina, in commemoration of the victory of Lepanto, gained in 1571, on the festival of that saint. Close by are the well-known lions, brought by Morosini from the Peloponnesus. The one which stands in such quiet majesty on the left of the entrance, and whose shoulders and sides are dappled over

with unintelligible Runic inscriptions, once stood at the entrance of the Piræus, the port of Athens—a fact which carries our thoughts to that classic city, and to the waters of the Ægean, which washed its foot, while ships of commerce and galleys of war passed in and out of that famous harbour. Nor can we help thinking that there is reason in the eloquent remarks of lord Nugent:—"Classical as well as moral justice has at last been done between these two famous seaborne republics of ancient and of modern Europe. Athens first framed and established within her walls that scheme of popular jurisprudence which has since been applied as the safeguard of personal rights and public justice in all free states—Venice, who invested with the symbols of democracy the most cruel, odious, and debauching tyranny of which any history bears record, and who finally, having surrendered all on purchase, even to the symbols themselves which she had so long dishonoured, lies chained to the footstool of one of the last remaining arbitrary governments of the world. The lions of the Piræus are at Venice still. But the Piræus is now again a free port, and Athens the capital of a free country, while Venice, a city of deserted palaces, is but the sepulchre of a proud vicious ancestry, whose descendants are subjects of Austria." Other thoughts, too, cross our mind as we survey these monuments of Athens, for did they not adorn the entrance of the port when the great apostle of the Gentiles sailed over its waters, and stepped on the old Greek landing-place?

Perchance the eyes of that memorable traveller turned to look at this very lion ; and thus the associations at the gate of the Venetian arsenal bring before us the teacher of truth and servant of God, to whom we men of Europe owe the bringing of the word of life across our borders.

The second lion, in an attitude of repose, is finer than the first, and is, like its companion, carved in Pentelic marble. The other two are decidedly inferior, both in material and execution. The first of these is more of a panther than a lion, and is sitting up. The second of them is a small mean-looking creature lying down.

In the arsenal is an armoury, containing numerous martial relics. Here are pieces of armour worn by the commanders who conquered in Cyprus, Candia, and the Morea ; bows and arrows used by the ancient Venetians ; crossbows of the sixteenth century ; Turkish halberds taken at Lepanto, helmets worn by Dandolo's officers at the siege of Constantinople ; standards and oriflammes captured in the wars of the Morea ; swords sent to the doges by the popes ; a culverine made by the son of the doge Pascal Cicogna ; models of cannons ; a suit of armour given by Henry iv. of France ; and a basin and keys of silver gilt, which were presented to Napoleon in 1807 when he visited the arsenal. Besides other curiosities in the way of armour and trophies, which our limits do not permit us to notice, there are various instruments of torture preserved as illustrations of the

cruelties practised in former times, the sight of which, like that of kindred relics in our own Tower of London, should awaken within us gratitude to Almighty God for the ameliorations in our social condition which have since taken place. Among these relics of atrocious inhumanity, we ought probably to reckon certain iron helmets of rude workmanship which prevented the wearer from either seeing or breathing. Similar head-pieces were used in some of our English prisons. Another horrible curiosity, but an implement of death rather than of torture, is a spring pistol, which, as well as some other articles here used for murderous and cruel purposes, is described as having belonged to Francesco da Carara. It is made for discharging poisoned needles, with which, we are told, the tyrant of Padua used to shoot the objects of his jealousy or revenge.

In the model room, which is a spacious apartment, one hundred and twenty-four feet long and sixty broad, is a collection of all kinds of models, illustrating the naval history of the republic, frigates, galleys, brigs, etc. Among these curious imitations of the old ships of the republic, is one of the Bucentaur, or doge's state barge. It was a vessel unfit for sailing, and was merely propelled by oars. It never went beyond the lagoons, and was only used at certain festivals. Its appearance must have been that of a floating palace, and when decked out with its flags and other ornaments, and manned by rowers in gorgeous liveries, it was no doubt a spectacle of strange pomp and

grandeur. The gilding of the last of these state barges cost above £10,000. The window in it is pointed out from which the doge threw the ring into the sea at the famous ceremony of wedding the Adriatic.

Within the arsenal are four docks, two large and two small. These are surrounded by dry docks for the building and repairing of vessels. The roofs and arches are of ancient workmanship, bearing shields and inscriptions. The long rope walk is supported by ninety-two Doric columns. All the workshops, foundries, and appurtenances of this vast establishment were once the scene of the busiest and most energetic labour. Here the ships of the republic were built and fitted up, and all needful stores provided, and arms prepared for the armaments which went forth from the lagoons. Here as many as sixteen thousand workmen at a time have been employed, arsenalotti as they were called, forming in the days of Venetian prosperity a privileged class. A detachment of these men guarded the gates of the ducal palace, the treasure of St. Mark, the bank, and the zecca. They carried the new doge after his nomination around the Place of St. Mark, and they only rowed the Bucentaur to the symbolic marriage of the sea. Their children were admitted to the corporation of the arsenal at eighteen years of age, to enjoy a perpetuation of the offices and privileges possessed by their fathers. Upon none could the state depend in times of emergency so well as upon the arsenalotti. None cherished such affection and

enthusiasm for the republic, which they called "Our Good Mother." None cried so loudly and warmly, "Long live St. Mark!"\*

Sadly did the establishment and the men employed in it decline in importance and numbers before the fall of Venice. Only five hundred hands were employed in the arsenal at the time when it was taken by the French. It is now the dockyard for the Austrian navy, which consists of three ships of the line, eight frigates, and about twelve armed brigs and schooners. There is a body of artillery three hundred and fifty strong, and a battalion of marine infantry amounting to twelve hundred. The stores contain arms for ten or twelve thousand men. About a thousand workmen are now employed on the different works, and of these one-half are convicts.

From the arsenal we must conduct the reader to the academy of the fine arts—from associations of war to those of peace. It is situated on the Grand Canal, in a building originally used as the convent of charity, and planned by Palladio with the utmost care. The academy is an association of artists, somewhat like our Royal Academy, who here exhibit their pictures, and hold their meetings. The room of assembly has paintings by Titian, and ancient sculpture collected by Cicognara. A vase stands over the president's chair, containing the right hand of Canova, and over it rests the chisel with which he wrought his marvels in marble. The exhibition of modern pictures which we saw,

\* Le Comte, p. 446.

contained productions of very various merit. The portraits were generally of an inferior class. Those which were best executed exhibited an unpleasant straining after effect. There were some landscapes, some architectural subjects, and some scenes of familiar life of considerable beauty; but too glaring in colour, and too much wanting in repose. The collection of old paintings must be spoken of in very different terms. To describe pictures is by no means easy to a writer, and not often interesting to a reader, and therefore we shall make no attempt of that kind. It must suffice just to indicate a few of the principal works of art which the academy contains. Titian, that master of colour, has left, in his picture of the Assumption of the Virgin, blackened though it be by the smoke of candles and incense, one of the most wonderful specimens of even his power in throwing upon canvass the richest, most mellowed, and most harmonious tints. St. John in the Desert is another fine work by the same master. Here are Tintorettes again and again, amongst which is the picture of a Venetian slave, full of muscular life and animated expression. Saints by Bonifazio, the Calling of the Sons of Zebedee by Marco Basaiti, the Raising of Lazarus by Bassano, and many others particularly attracted our attention and produced delight. And then, in addition to works of beautiful art, are some pictures of deep interest from their antiquity and truthful representations of Venice and her people at the time they were painted. One particularly valuable



in this respect is by Gentile Bellini, executed in 1496. It shows a procession in St. Mark's Place, and a cure said to have been miraculously wrought as the brotherhood of St. John were bearing along a portion of the cross. The architecture introduced is very full, clear, and minute, and gives a perfect idea of the Piazza as it was in the fifteenth century. Some changes in details have taken place since then, but there are few scenes which have undergone so little alteration in four hundred years. The figures are very life-like, and as you look on the old-fashioned costumes you are enabled to form a very vivid idea of the Venetian inhabitants at the era to which the picture relates.

The academy is connected with the history of painting at Venice, which has founded a school of genius and taste all its own, and left its name in a conspicuous position and in brilliant characters upon the roll which records the progress of the fine arts in Europe; Antonello da Messina, of whom some curious little productions are preserved; the Bellini, justly celebrated for the power of expression in their works; Carpaccio, Rocco Marconi, simple but full of sentiment, who had already discovered the secret of colouring;—they were the predecessors of Giorgione, whose works, replete with originality, prove him to be indeed a master of his beautiful art; while his story, so full of sorrow, gives to his name a double interest, and surrounds his memory with blended associations. Inspired by the feeling which his pictures breathe, he fell a victim to wounded and disappointed affection, and died of a

broken heart at the age of thirty-three. Sebastian del Piombo imitated Giorgione, but Titian was the inheritor of his genius, and completed and crowned the style of art which Giorgione had begun. Of him we have spoken before. Tintoretto and Paul Veronese were disciples of the great master; with kindred spirit and deep reverence they followed in his track, but not with equal steps. Through the last half of the sixteenth century Venice stands alone in the history of painting, holding forth the brilliant lights of art when others had theirs extinguished. They studied nature, and drank in its inspiration under their own pure skies. The colours of the heavens, and the sea, and the earth, and the works of men, they gazed upon intently, till they seemed to catch their reflection, and then transferred it to their pictures. D. Tintoretto, and the sons and nephews of Paul Veronese, preserved the traditions without imbibing the spirit of their illustrious predecessors. Vicentino, Aliense, and Liberi struggled against the mannerism which invaded the realms of art, but the Venetian school gradually declined. Canaletto brought up the rear of the great Venetian painters, but his works, though very beautiful as picturesque views of his own city, are from their subjects of a lower rank in the scale of artistic merit than those of the great names which adorn an earlier age.\*

Among the public buildings of Venice notice must be taken of those known by the name Scuole. The Scuole were institutions composed chiefly of laymen, but under the direction and

\* We are mainly indebted to Le Comte for this outline.

control of ecclesiastics. Their object was benevolent ; they visited the poor, provided clothing for them, put boys to service, gave dowries to maidens—in short, did many kind things which are effected among us by associations and charitable trusts. The Scuole were quite dependent upon voluntary contributions, and their history is a pleasing monument of generous dispositions among the old Venetian people. The Scuola di San Marco is a remarkable and imposing structure, of mixed Byzantine and Italian, close to the church of SS. Giovanni e Paolo. The interior is said to contain some good carvings. The Scuola di San Rocca is another building of this class, of considerable architectural interest, being generally regarded as the work of Pietro Lombardo ; it contains several valuable pictures. In these buildings the benevolent people of Venice in old time carried on very praiseworthy projects, and therefore, in the estimation of many who visit the ancient city, the Scuole will stand amongst the most pleasing mementoes of its past history. Numerous benevolent institutions still exist in Venice, but not more than the decayed state of the place and the consequent poverty of the people require.

The Dogana, or custom-house, opposite the mole of the Piazzetta, has been already mentioned. It was built in 1682. There are few other buildings and institutions which require notice in a small work like this. The post-office is a handsome Corinthian edifice, at the corner of a canal running out of the Grand Canal not far from the Rialto. It was originally a palace of the Grimani. The police office

has no architecture to boast of. There are, as might be expected in a city much given to gay pleasures, several theatres; that called *La Fenice* is said to be one of the largest in Italy. A taste for music extensively prevails among the Venetians, and the people are remarkably fond of all kinds of amusement, in this respect retaining their old character. The carnivals are still kept up, at which time many of the lower orders appear in masks. The upper classes, it may be added, are at all times distinguished by affability and politeness, and have a certain polish in their manners which is very winning.

Among the institutions not already mentioned, there are a gymnasium, a lyceum for scientific culture, a seminary for clerical students, two colleges for females, an athenæum, and several libraries. The printing-presses of Venice, though not rivalling the fame of those which belonged to the Aldi, are still active, and in this respect surpass all others in Italy. The book trade is flourishing, a great number of works printed here being for exportation. An Italian version of the Scriptures, executed by Bruccioli of Venice, and revised by Mannocchi, was published in this city in 1538, when the Reformation was beginning to shed its light on the republic, only, alas! to be quenched in deeper darkness. It would, we apprehend, be no easy matter to procure from a Venetian bookseller now a copy of that version, or indeed to obtain any other in the vernacular tongue at anything like a moderate price.

## CHAPTER VI.

## ADJACENT ISLES.

THE island of Murano has an ancient celebrity for the manufacture of glass. Its reputation was established during the middle ages, and was early known in our own country. A curious letter by Howel, dated Venice, May 30, 1621, illustrates the wonder which the productions of this island at a later period excited in the mind of an English traveller. "Among other little gentile islands," he says, "which attend the city of Venice, there is one called Murano, about the distance of a little mile, where crystal glasses are made, and 'tis a rare sight to see a whole street, where on the one side there are about twenty furnaces at work perpetually both day and night." A great air of mystery lurked around the operations of the glass-makers of Murano at that time, and it was supposed that nowhere but in their own island could they make such beautiful articles—Howel ludicrously attributing their pre-eminence to "the quality and clearness of the circumambient air which hangs over the place and favoureth the manufacture." "It is wonderful," he observes, in a

letter of the following month, "to see what diversities of shape and strange forms those curious artists will make in glass, as I saw a complete galley, with all her masts, sails, cables, tackling, prow, poop, forecastle, anchors, with the long boat, all made out in crystal glass, as also a man in armour." Drinking glasses from Murano were at that period in high repute amongst our ancestors, and were rich adornments on the cupboard shelves of the English ladies; it was idly supposed, too, that they possessed a mysterious power of detecting poison. Sir Thomas Browne observes in grave refutation, "Though it be said that poison will break a Venice glass, yet have we not met any of that nature."\*

It is remarked by very competent authority, that, judging from the curious specimens to be seen in this country, the Venetian glass-blowers must have been persons of considerable skill. Venetian glass balls, being manufactures from Murano, composed of a coating of white glass, enclosing different coloured pieces fused together, are well known. Knife handles were made in the same way. There artists originated the method of glass engraving, and revived the ancient practice of making mosaic glass pictures. But the glass trade in the Murano, like everything else about Venice, has declined. There are no such rows of furnaces to be seen there now as Howel speaks of. Various articles

\* "Curiosities of Glass-making," by Apsley Pellatt, Esq., M.P. To this interesting work we are chiefly indebted for our notices of Venetian glass-making.

indeed are still made, but bugles and beads are at the present day the staple manufacture. They have no rivals in cheapness and quality, and enormous quantities of them are annually exported for African and other foreign markets. There are about five thousand inhabitants on the island, and the glass-making is their chief employment. It is stated that the returns for articles in glass made in Murano and Venice amounted a few years since to above £300,000.

Murano has a *duomo* or cathedral, a sort of St. Mark's in miniature. It is a building of the twelfth century, constructed about the time of the removal hither of the remains of San Donato, bishop of Evorea, in Epirus; one of those treasures which, highly as the Venetians valued silver and gold, and marble and precious stones, they esteemed above all others. The apse is the most remarkable portion of the exterior. The capitals of the lower colonnades were evidently brought from different buildings, as they do not at all match each other. Upon several triangular pieces of marble inserted as ornaments, there are wrought curious Byzantine patterns. The interior contains a number of fine marble columns, and the hemisphere of the apse is composed of antique mosaic. A statue of the Virgin in the same hard eastern style, which belongs to some of the earlier mosaics of St. Mark's, looks down upon you with a grim cold aspect. The floor is tessellated in patterns of various kinds, some of them resembling Roman pavements. Though parts of the church have been altered and modernized,

an air of great antiquity pervades the whole, and renders the building an object of much interest to the archæological visitor. In the church of San Pietro there are several fine pictures.

Near to Murano is another island, which derives its name from the convent which occupies it, called San Michele di Murano. The buildings are extensive, with spacious cloisters and a large burial-place, where Franciscan monks may be seen gliding about like shadows of the past. There is a monument in the church to the memory of a cardinal who died while he was preaching a sermon to his monks; another to the chevalier Bernini; and a third to the memory of the monk Eusebius, containing a Latin inscription by the celebrated printer, Manutius Aldus :—

“Lector, parumper siste; rem miram leges:  
Hic Eusebii, Hispanici monachi, corpus situm est.” \*

The chapel Emiliana, connected with the church, is a beautiful edifice of a hexagonal form, and enriched with bas-reliefs and marbles, including verd antique and porphyry. It has three altars and three doors, and produces a sevenfold echo like that of the Lurelie on the Rhine.†

The island of Torcello is at a greater distance from Venice, and is in itself interesting from the circumstance of its being the mother isle of the city on the lagoons. It was to this spot that the inhabitants of the mainland, driven before

\* Reader, pause a little; you will read a wonderful thing:  
Here lies the body of Eusebius, a Spanish monk.

† Le Comte notices this resemblance.



the sword of Attila, fled for safety. It had its cathedral before St. Mark's was founded, and hither the bishop of Altino translated his see in 635, when oppressed by the Arians of Lombardy. The city was in its prosperity between the seventh and eleventh centuries, having its nobility and its senate, and maintaining the forms of a distinct republic. A relic connected with its ancient government remains in a stone chair, standing in an open field, and half covered with weeds, where the podesta or chief ruler of 'Torcello used to be enthroned. Tradition, which always gives the highest antiquity to such objects, and loves to associate them with great names, calls it *the throne of Attila*. The duomo of 'Torcello is a favourite study for architectural antiquaries. It was built in the eleventh century by the bishop Orso Orsealo, son of the celebrated doge of that name. The nave has the form of a basilica, and is evidently copied from some old Roman model. The columns and other ornaments of the dome probably once belonged to a Roman edifice erected during the decline of the empire. The pavement is very rich, and equal in many respects to that of St. Mark, while it has the advantage of being better preserved. The walls are covered with mosaics of the twelfth century, full of figures and designs, rude and even hideous. The future state is intended to be shown in some of these old stone pictures, and they serve, as well as numerous paintings and sculptures all over Europe, to illustrate the very gross and unscriptural conceptions of the other world which

prevailed during the middle ages. "The marble cancelli of the choir remain almost unaltered; the windows are closed by valves or shutters composed of huge slabs of stone. Glass has been inserted in the apertures, but this is a late addition. We do not believe that any other example exists of this most ancient construction. But the most instructive portion of the duomo is the apse or hemicycle. As you stand in this decaying solitary sanctuary, you understand the force of the ancient principle of church government—'The bishop more than bishop when surrounded by his presbyters—the presbyters less than presbyters when the bishop is away.' The bishop's chair remains in many other churches, but this is the only example remaining in which the seats for the clergy as well as the throne have continued undestroyed. They are arranged exactly upon the plan of a Roman theatre."\* The Campanile, distinct from the church, commands a fine view of the adjacent isles, the Adriatic, and the Alps. Santa Forsa is a small church, named after a virgin of noble birth, whose relics it is asserted to contain. It is perhaps as old as the tenth century, and is framed upon a Greek model, as the duomo is upon a Latin one. The columns are Byzantine. The Venetian architects evidently studied this specimen of early ecclesiastical architecture, and availed themselves of its suggestions in their own celebrated works.

The island itself is the seat of wildness and desolation. It has a few houses scattered over

\* Quarterly Review, No. 150, p. 383.

it. "The roads," says Le Comte, "which cross these solitudes are day after day left untrodden. The hand of industry has not been employed on the soil, and altogether nature has her own way. Things grow as they like without aid or hindrance, and climb over hedges which men have never planted; osier copses and brakes afford a passage for the sea water, and serve as a retreat for game the most quiet imaginable. The few inhabitants of Torcello live on fish. The teal and the petrel build there with an indifference which shows how surely they reckon on mariners not being sportsmen."

The isles of Burano and Mayarbo contain extensive garden grounds, which mainly help to supply vegetables for the use of the Venetians.

The Lido is a celebrated island. There stands the castle of St. Andrea, erected by Sanmicheli, in 1545, a building extraordinary for its strength and stability considering the soil on which it stands, continually washed as it is by the Adriatic waves. It takes the form of a pentagon, with a bastion elevated in the centre. The arrangements are praised by critics in military engineering, and the red walls, with their embrasures, cannons, and catapults, form a picturesque background to the eye of an artist. It was up to this castle that the Bucen-taur performed its annual state voyage. The water just opposite was the scene of the mystic marriage. From 1520 to 1796 the repetition of it was never neglected. 276 ducal rings have been dropped beneath the billows there, of which only one has ever been found—a fish

had swallowed it. The prolongation of the island opposite the fort takes another name, and is called Malamocco, a name celebrated in the history of the wars between Genoa and Venice. The Lido is a favourite place of resort for the Venetians. Here they promenade and hold fêtes and festivals, distinguished by the light gaiety, and, it is to be feared, much of the vicious dissipation which modern Venice inherits from ancient Venice. The Lido is extensive and desolate enough in some parts, added to which there are sources of pensive thought and feeling afforded in the Jewish burial-ground, where the humble tombs, grown over with moss, or covered with sand-drift, are striking mementoes of the condition of that wonderful race of which a few are buried there. Fishermen and boatmen inhabit the island, and it is said that the women preserve the old chants of the gondoliers, sometimes in the very words of Tasso. "They have a custom," observes the author of the *Curiosities of Literature*, "when their husbands are fishing out at sea, to sit along the shores in the evening and vociferate these songs, and continue to do so with great violence till each of them can distinguish the responses of her own husband at a distance."\* Towards evening is the time to visit the Lido, the sunsets from it are very magnificent, the sea all gold, the Apennines all purple, and Venice between, like a city of ships, floating and resting on its own shadow. But the changes in the pictures are innumerable

\* Hobhouse.

Well do we remember seeing it after sunset, with stormy clouds on one side, and bright crimson ones on the other, while the lamps of St. Mark, lighted up one by one, came out like beautiful diamonds on the forehead of the marble city, flashing their light upon the waters, which caught and redoubled their rays.

Such scenes can be viewed by none but the most giddy or the most apathetic without a measure of serious feeling. It is natural, in the presence of objects which have witnessed the changes of centuries, and which in themselves exhibit the effects of the lapse of time, to think of infinite duration as the attribute of Him in the hollow of whose hand all material things and all forms of spiritual existence are held, and of the immortal destiny of those upon our earth, who can muse as they gaze on the perishing objects before them, because possessed of minds gifted with intelligence and emotion. Cities like Venice, carrying back their history into the remote past, full of the monuments of human art and industry, recording in their buildings as well as their annals the dispensations of a Divine Providence, strike us as no less suggestive—in some respects even more so—of thoughts touching on the eternal and the infinite, than the great mountain and the broad valley, the out-spread plain, and the wide, deep sea. The objects of nature, untouched by any hand but God's, are indeed symbols of his immensity, and images of the continued being which belongs to human souls ; but in looking at old cities, where men have

trodden the streets generation after generation, and lived, and died, and toiled, and suffered, and feared, and hoped, we get beyond mere symbols and images of the spiritual, and are brought into immediate contact with mind itself; even with a succession of minds that have passed through the material scenes before us, but were connected with them in what was only the infancy of their being, and are now living for ever in other worlds to which this is but the gateway. We feel that the embodied spirits now passing to and fro in the busy thoroughfares, engaged in temporal concerns, are following the awful crowd of spirits who have led the way to eternity, and will themselves soon all appear before God; nor can we forget that the Being they are to meet has ever watched, and will ever watch the doings of his creatures here below, that his eyes are on their ways, and that his ear catches their every word. Not in vague sentimentalism, not in the *common-places of poetry*, should we suffer the mental excitement produced by looking on a city like Venice to spend its force. Our thoughts should take shape, distinct, intelligible, resting on individual souls and a personal God. And surely here the book which reveals to us the past and the future, the infinite and the eternal, should be brought in by us to our aid, and we should blend the truth learned from its pages with all our thoughts of man and his Maker. There we are taught that the time is coming when the earth and all the works that are therein shall be burned up; that a throne of judgment is to

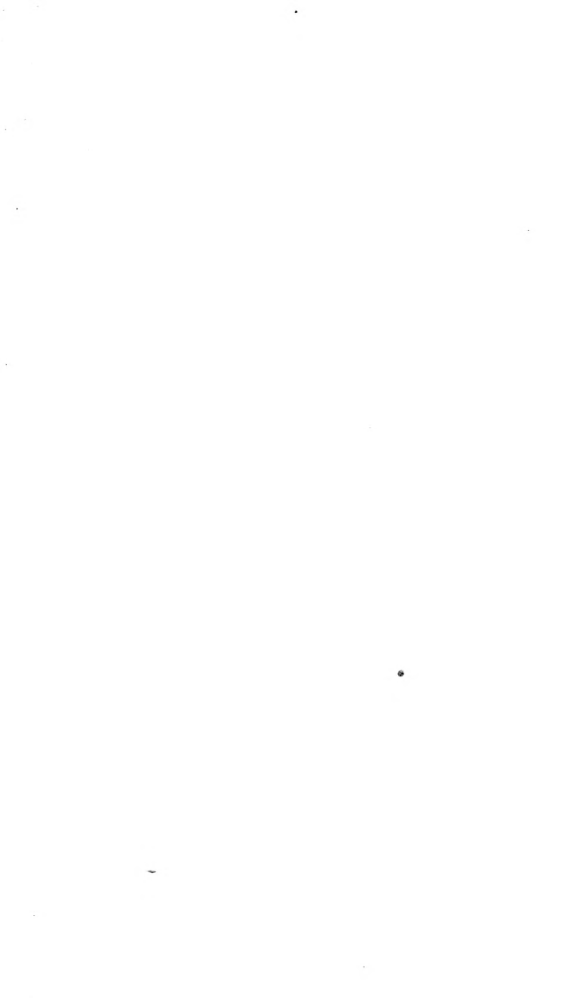
be established for the children of men, before which the heavens and the earth shall flee away, and there shall be no more sea.

The inhabitants of Tyre, and Jerusalem, and Athens, and Rome, and Venice, and London, and every other city, shall, individually, pass under the scrutiny of the omniscient and righteous Judge. The sea shall give up the dead that are in it, and every island, as well as every mountain, shall be removed out of its place. The deeds of secret crime which the lagoons have covered, and every hidden thing, shall then come to light. All the injustice, and licentiousness, and falsehood, and deceit, and treachery, and ambition, and revenge which have been indulged in the city just described, and elsewhere, shall come into judgment. And on the other hand, the souls of the martyrs, of all who in any way have suffered for righteousness' sake, who have been faithful to truth and obedient to the gospel, shall come forth to the resurrection of eternal life. As we look on the Venetian canals, and think of the holy men who there found a watery grave in the sixteenth century, we associate them with a multitude more who have been valiant for the truth on the earth, and whose record is on high. Glorious and joyful will be their rising, blessed the welcome given them by Him for whom they suffered, honourable their reward, and lasting their crown. And with these awful anticipations of the future which the word of God creates, are associated those gracious and cheering convictions which alone could enable us to endure the former, and

for which we are indebted to the gospel. We think of Him who came into the world to save sinners, who atoned for our sins, and ascended to heaven, and sent down the regenerating Spirit for our sanctification and comfort. We recognise the method of acceptance with God through faith in Christ, and the necessity of a new birth through the mysterious operation of the Holy Ghost. These distinct evangelical conceptions should habitually arise in our minds in all our religious musings, whether we are within the walls of a church, or amidst nature's solitudes, or encompassed by city scenes and occupations. Our thoughts of the invisible and the spiritual should be religious, and our religion should be Christian. And let us add, our Christianity should be personal, experimental, and practical, not merely in the head but in the heart, imbuing the whole character, and pervading the entire conduct.

These thoughts are appropriate in the presence of objects such as we have just described. They are appropriate everywhere and always, and as such we commend them affectionately to every reader, with earnest prayer that they may duly affect and influence his mind, while we now close our outline of the history of the Venetian republic, and our sketch of the city and its environs.





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